



## News Release

### Nunavut's Turbot Fishery Threatened

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (November 16, 2005)** – Nunavut Environment Minister Olayuk Akesuk is raising the alarm that the federal government is once again preparing to make fish off of Nunavut's coast available to southern fishing interests.

The federal government is consulting with the Atlantic fishers about an upcoming increase in the turbot allocation. This is despite past recommendations from a federal advisory panel that Nunavut should receive all new allocations until it receives a nationally comparable share of its coastal resources.

"They are talking to interests in the Atlantic fishery sector about our fish. They won't listen to the advice that has been given them by their own panel and they are continuing to ignore Nunavut's position. This is totally unacceptable and I object in the strongest terms possible," said Akesuk.

The Minister pointed out the situation is akin to DFO consulting only Nunavut about quotas and fish stocks off the coastline of the Atlantic Provinces.

"That wouldn't be acceptable in the south and it's not acceptable in the north," Akesuk said.

The DFO increase under consideration would see the turbot quota in the NAFO Division 0A increase by at least 2,500 tonnes. The increase would start in 2006.

"This quota increase is an opportunity for DFO to make the right decision – a decision that would treat Nunavut as an equal partner in Canada and allow us to develop our fishery and move towards economic independence. Instead, once again, it appears DFO is going to give away our fish," said Akesuk.

Nunavut is the only jurisdiction that has a claim to the turbot in 0A on the basis of historic use, economic dependence and adjacency. "This resource would not have been developed without Nunavut and now that we have shown it can be commercially fished the federal government wants to give it away," Akesuk said.

Nunavut has been campaigning for some time for fair and equitable commercial access to fish and shrimp in waters off its coastlines. That campaign is driven by the fact that Nunavut currently has only 38 per cent of commercial fishing quotas in its adjacent waters. Even if Nunavut were awarded the entire increase in the allocation the territorial allocation would still only be 42 per cent. In contrast, other coastal jurisdictions in

Canada have from 80 per cent to 90 per cent access to commercial quotas in their adjacent waters.

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