



News Release

Government Ministers Lobby for Federal Support for Fishery in Nunavut's Economy

IQALUIT, Nunavut (June 3, 2008) –Patterk Netser, Nunavut's Minister of Economic Development & Transportation, and Olayuk Akesuk, Nunavut's Minister of Environment, took a strong stand on the importance of the fishery to Nunavut's economy, and the need for federal support to ensure Nunavummiut have access to their marine resources.

The government ministers each made presentations to the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans during their hearing in Iqaluit June 2, 2008.

"In the past, where Canadians had the potential for a fishery adjacent their communities, harbours were built to provide safe access to that resource. This needs to happen in Nunavut as well," said Minister Netser. "We have enormous fishery potential right on our doorstep. Yet the physical infrastructure we need to develop that potential – the harbours – is missing."

The Minister acknowledged the 2008 federal government's budget included provisions for the construction of a harbour in Pangnirtung. But he says with almost all of Nunavut's communities on a coastline, the federal government needs to do more.

"We don't accept that it is the intention of the federal government to build only one harbour here in Nunavut, where there are twenty-five communities along two-thirds of Canada's coastline," Minister Netser said. "Small craft harbours are essential to the economic growth of the territory, and we will continue to press the federal government to provide the infrastructure we need in Nunavut to build a sustainable economy for our future."

During Minister Olayuk Akesuk's presentation, he pointed to the negative impact of recent Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) decisions on Nunavut's fishery. "We see the enormous disparity between the federal government's investment in fishery infrastructure in southern Canada and in Nunavut as discriminatory," he said.

The Senate's Fisheries and Oceans Committee is holding hearings this week in Nunavut. Yesterday they were in Iqaluit. Later this week they will travel to Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuak, Pond Inlet, Resolute, Nanisivik and Arctic Bay.

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2008-22-C