

NEWS *RELEASE*

Seafood industry applauds Canada's leadership in building the new NAFO

September 28, 2006 – (St. John's, NL) Seafood producers welcome the agreement achieved in Dartmouth last week to reform the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). Producers are particularly pleased with Canada's leadership in strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance measures, and in establishing, at long last, an efficient process to deal with objections from contracting parties decisively and without unreasonable delays.

“The new NAFO will make it much harder for fishing vessels to get away with cheating,” said Derek Butler, Executive Director of the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP), one of the country's largest seafood industry organizations. “This is certainly welcome news in Canada. Years of talk and posturing – but little action – have fuelled widespread skepticism about NAFO's ability to make the substantive changes that had to be made. But there can be no question that this is real and meaningful progress.”

“NAFO could never work as long as the rewards outweighed the risks for vessels who choose to operate outside the rules. These reforms set a new direction,” said Mr. Butler. “With respect to dispute settlement, it is a great achievement to get rid of the ridiculous objection procedure that essentially allowed a contracting party to set its own allocations.”

“In the face of some strong opposition, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Loyola Hearn believed that NAFO could be re-invented for the better, and showed the political backbone to make it happen,” said Mr. Butler. “The industry applauds the hard work of the Canadian delegation at NAFO, with Minister Hearn's leadership, in accomplishing what many had worried could not be done.”

Background on the reforms achieved at NAFO's 2006 General Meeting is available online at <http://www.nafo.int/about/media/press/press06.html>.

The Association of Seafood Producers is a not-for-profit corporation, set up to serve as the industry association for Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood producers, and to act in the best interests of the seafood industry generally. Association members produce more than 60% of the total production value of Newfoundland and Labrador's fishing industry, with total annual sales well over \$500 million. Collectively, Association members own and operate some 50+ processing plants in rural communities throughout the province.

- 30 -

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