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## **Commons Committee Critical of Fisheries Department**

**OTTAWA**—“The report on the management of the 2004 Fraser River sockeye fishery released by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans provides some commendable recommendations relating to the long term management of the Fraser fishery but offers little direction to the Department on how to improve its sorry record of fisheries management,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-Richmond East).

The Committee’s report was tabled in the House of Commons. It included a supplementary report, *Ensuring a Future for Fraser River Sockeye: An Action Plan for the 2005 Season*, by Cummins. The *Action Plan* addresses shortcomings in the Standing Committee’s by providing clear, measurable and attainable conservation measures.

“The objective of the *Action Plan* and its recommendations is to prevent a repeat of the 2004 disaster on this year’s fishery. If implemented, my recommendations will: (i) rebuild the Department’s enforcement branch, (ii) end the illegal sale of food, social and ceremonial fish and (iii) prohibit the destructive set net fishery in the Fraser canyon,” Cummins said. The recommendations include:

### **I. Fishery Management**

- The Pacific Salmon Commission’s Fraser River Panel should manage all fisheries on the Fraser River including aboriginal fisheries.
- All set net fisheries must be prohibited.

### **II. Structure of a new Enforcement Branch**

- Fisheries enforcement must be a stand alone agency within the Department of Fisheries, separate from fisheries management.
- Fisheries officers should receive Police Agency designation.

### **III. Funding of new Enforcement Branch**

- A permanent staff of 75 full time fisheries officers (2.5 times the current complement) must be dedicated to regaining control of the Fraser fishery.

### **IV. Support for the Enforcement Branch**

- All fish harvested under food social and ceremonial licenses must be clearly marked upon capture and throughout any storage or processing operation.
- Commercial cold storage or processing facilities must notify Fisheries enforcement of the comment of the movement of commercial quantities of fish.
- Inter-provincial and international transport of fish caught under food, social or ceremonial licenses must be prohibited.

“The Department of Fisheries and Oceans failed miserably to protect Fraser River sockeye in 2004. The recommendations in the supplementary report will protect the Fraser River fishery from another disaster,” Cummins concluded.

**Contact: John Cummins, M.P.**  
**(613) 992-2957, (cell) (604) 970-0937, (604) 940-8040**  
[www.johncummins.ca](http://www.johncummins.ca)