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Fraser River commercial fishermen call for Judicial Inquiry into the Management of Fraser River Salmon

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Bob McKamey, a representative for commercial gillnet fishermen on the Fraser River, today called upon Prime Minister Harper to keep his promise and hold a judicial inquiry into the management of the Fraser River salmon fishery.

"This is the third year of disastrous sockeye returns," said McKamey of the Area E Harvest Committee which represents gillnet vessels that fish commercially on the Fraser River.

Sockeye are on a four year cycle, so the fish that spawned in 2005 were supposed to provide a bumper harvest this year, but less than 1.3 million salmon returned and nobody yet knows how many of these fish will make it to the spawning grounds.

"DFO's epic mismanagement of Fraser sockeye has been regularly covered up and it's long past time we got some honest answers. We don't have time to watch four more years of compromise and ass covering from here to Ottawa," said McKamey.

"We've been calling for a judicial inquiry into DFO's management of Fraser salmon since 1992, but DFO always finds some way to avoid being accountable and now the department has destroyed 3 of the 4 cycle years of our once-magnificent Fraser sockeye runs," said McKamey.

"We've always asked tough questions about DFO's management, so when the Minister came to B.C. last week to meet with 'stakeholders,' DFO bureaucrats hand-picked their participants to prevent the Minister from hearing difficult questions. We are the largest organization of commercial fishermen on the Fraser River, but we were not invited. We need more than a group hug – we need a judicial inquiry," said McKamey.

"DFO and most other fishing interests have fought hard against a judicial inquiry, but we are not afraid to put our fishery under a microscope. All other users and especially DFO management should put their operations under the same microscope," said McKamey, "Anyone who doesn't want a judicial inquiry has either something to hide or they don't think Fraser salmon are worth saving.

"This is no longer about who gets to fish, it's about the survival of Fraser River salmon," concluded McKamey,

For more information please call Bob McKamey at 604-826-2658