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DFO Fisheries Management Continues to Confound Keep the Commercial Guys Fishing

Delta, B.C.—“DFO fisheries management continues to confound on at least two fronts,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-Richmond East).

First: The commercial fishery on the Fraser closed Thursday for the weekend even though the river is still full of fish,”

Nevertheless, aboriginal fishermen who are licensed to fish in the all-citizens commercial fishery will continue to fish in a separate aboriginal commercial fishery from Friday September 3rd through to Sunday 5th.

This double dipping, primarily by members of the Katzie, Tsawwassen and Musqueam bands, is especially galling to non-aboriginal commercial fishermen who can only stand on the beach and watch aboriginal commercial fishermen who competed with them yesterday enjoy another opportunity to fish commercially today,” said Cummins. “Government sanctioned segregation should have no place in a modern democratic Canada.”

Second: In part to protect returning Coho, the Department intends to close the commercial sockeye fishery in the Fraser River as of Tuesday, September 7th even though there are still perhaps millions of sockeye in excess of spawning requirements that could be caught.

“All commercial vessels are equipped with ‘live boxes’ to be used if Coho are being intercepted. Therefore Coho interception is not a valid reason to close the fishery,” said Cummins.

Shutting down the commercial fishery simply means that huge numbers of sockeye in excess to spawning requirements will crowd the spawning grounds.

“The fishery should stay open next week,” said Cummins. “A refusal to keep it open is unreasonable; it threatens future runs, wastes a valuable resource and is costly to fishermen.”

“If there was ever a time for commercial fishermen to be fishing, it is now,” Cummins concluded.

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