



September 7, 2010

## **Why the Double Standard?**

### **Why Close the Commercial Fishery Equipped to Protect Coho and Open the Aboriginal Fishery which is not?**

**Delta, B.C.**—“This morning, Tuesday September 7th, at 7:00 o’clock, DFO closed the commercial salmon fishery for the balance of the season but has allowed continued aboriginal fishing,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-Richmond East).

DFO Area Director Barry Rosenberger is reported to have said “Coho concerns and conservation objectives will supersede harvest opportunities,” -- the Department must shut down the sockeye fishery to protect the Coho. Rosenberger is supported by aboriginal fisheries spokesman Ernie Crey who says that the commercial fleet should be shut down: “when the Coho ... move into the system, it’s a good thing they’re not fishing.”

These are surely the words of real conservationists and who can argue with the underlying sentiment of “save our salmon.” However, Mr. Rosenberger’s and Mr. Crey’s comments raise some questions.

The Department requires commercial fishermen to carry working revival boxes aboard in case they catch a Coho. If Coho are caught they are placed in the revival box, fresh water is pumped past their gills. When the fish has ‘revived’ it is gently placed back in the water to continue its journey to the spawning grounds. DFO places a high priority on revival boxes and will charge commercial fishermen who don’t have an operating revival box, even Coho have yet to return to coastal waters to spawn.

- Why is the commercial fishery shut down and native fisheries allowed to continue? Why the double standard?
- Why are aboriginal fishermen who fish in the separate aboriginal fisheries not required to have revival boxes? Are Coho killed by aboriginal fishermen not just as dead as Coho caught by other Canadians?
- Why is DFO shutting down the commercial fishing fleet, which is equipped to revive the incidental catch of Coho, but it will continue to allow the aboriginal commercial, food, social and ceremonial fisheries to continue when they are not equipped to deal with incidentally caught Coho?
- Why does DFO allow the native set net fishery to continue when it too is not equipped to deal with incidentally caught Coho?

- Why would the Department charge a fisherman for not having an operating revival box on his boat when there are no Coho present in coastal waters and then shut down the Sockeye fishery when Coho start to return? Why have the bloody boxes in the first place if you're not going to have the opportunity to use them?
- Why is it that certain aboriginals are able to fish in the public commercial fishery, the aboriginal commercial fishery and the aboriginal food, social and ceremonial fishery? Why the double and triple dipping?

“The Courts have ruled that conservation is the first priority in fisheries management. What could possibly motivate the Department to close a commercial fishery which is equipped to protect Coho salmon and to open an aboriginal fishery which is not?” said Cummins. “Their failure to enforce consistent conservation standards across all user groups is shameful.”

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