



**John Cummins**  
Official Opposition Critic  
Fisheries and Oceans

## **News Release**

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### **Fisheries Minister Ignores Advice Puts An End To Historic Cod Fishery and Its Fishermen**

**OTTAWA**— “Making Gulf of St. Lawrence cod fishermen walk the plank is a mistake that threatens the future recovery of the remaining cod stocks,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-South Richmond).

The Fisheries Resources Conservation Council (FRCC), strongly recommended against the complete closure of the fishery in the Gulf. The Council is the advisor to the Minister of Fisheries on Atlantic fisheries management issues.

“Fishermen can be the guardians of the resource. Their catch reports can keep scientists abreast of the ongoing state of cod stocks. Without their input the Minister must rely solely on estimates prepared by DFO bureaucrats,” Cummins said.

For the past several years the Council has recommended aggressive conservation measures to ensure the recovery of cod stocks. They had recommended the immediate establishment of special spawning and nursery areas to protect young cod. Recommendations included:

- Ending seismic testing in these areas, an activity the Council believes has a negative impact on fish productivity.
- Ending fishing activity in these areas. Fishing on spawning concentrations disrupts spawning activity and reduces the viability of eggs.
- Exclusion of seals from these areas. In the view of the FRCC seals have become the largest single threat to the recovery of cod stocks. Spawning areas must be free of this predator. The survival of young cod depends upon it.

Until now the Minister has ignored such advice from the Council. “Today’s conservation measures are half hearted,” said Cummins. “It is not yet clear that the Minister is convinced that, except against fishermen, aggressive conservation measures need to be instituted.”

The Council also recommended action to deal with the cod by-catch, the cod accidentally caught in other fisheries. Today the Minister failed to address by-catch concerns.

“The Minister has cherry-picked the Council’s recommendation’s, ignoring key conservation measures necessary to ensure the long-term survival of the cod fishery,” concluded Cummins.

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