



**John Cummins**  
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## **News Release**

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### **Liberal Members Thwart Work of Committee on Illegal Fisheries Regulations**

**OTTAWA**— "Staff from the Liberal Whip's office today scurried from member to member like rats on a raft after advising how to delay a Disallowance Report and prevent the Scrutiny of Regulations Committee from doing its job," said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-South Richmond).

"The Liberal majority continues to prostitute the work of the Committee," Cummins observed. "They accept inducements from the Minister of Fisheries to prevent the disallowance of illegal fisheries regulations."

Prominent Liberals were in attendance, including Tom Wappel, Chair of the Fisheries Committee, and Georges Farrah, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries. Some 350 fishermen are charged under the illegal fishery regulations for engaging in a protest. These Liberal M.P.s are no friend of fishermen.

Today the Liberal majority on the Joint Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations forced the postponement of the adoption of a report disallowing the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations. The Disallowance Report was drafted following all-party agreement in early December.

This is the second time the Liberals have forced postponement of disallowance this month. The report was to have been adopted on February 6th. The Committee had the Disallowance Report prepared over the Christmas break so that it could be dealt with at the first opportunity in 2003 as it wanted the Department of Fisheries to have ample opportunity to enact new regulations consistent with the Fisheries Act.

When the Scrutiny of Regulations Committee was established in the mid-eighties as part of parliamentary reform, the government undertook not to interfere in the Committee's work. Yet once again this government has chosen to interfere with the work of a Committee charged by Parliament to determine the legality of regulations enacted by bureaucrats.

The courts have often said that the government must be mindful of the honour of the Crown when dealing with aboriginals and obviously the same must apply in the government's dealings with all Canadians.

"Fishermen's hopes for justice were dealt another blow today," Cummins said.

"This government and the Liberal members of the Committee have repeatedly ignored a fundamental precept of a democratic society. They are intent on leaving in place the illegal regulations and prosecuting fishermen who have merely protested their illegality," Cummins concluded.

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