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Fisheries Ministers Mislead Ontario Fishermen

OTTAWA—“The Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and his federal counterpart are misleading Ontario fishermen,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-Richmond East). “The Ministers are claiming that they will have to shutdown the Ontario fishery if they do not get their way in Parliament.”

“Their threats and intimidation are only an indication of the need to affirm the disallowance of the illegal provisions in the *Ontario Fishing Regulations* and to stand firmly against Bill C-52. The Bill would empower bureaucrats to attach terms and conditions to fishing licenses having the force of law,” Cummins observed. “These Ministers are shamelessly acting as a mouthpiece for their bureaucrats.”

Bill C-52, an *Act to Amend the Fisheries Act* would –

- Impose a criminal sanction of up to a year in jail for breaking a term or condition attached to a fishing license.
- Give bureaucrats the power to add whatever term or condition to the fishing license they see fit and would force fishermen to obey or face jail time.
- Remove the requirement for the government to publish or make public these regulations involving terms and conditions attached to fishing licenses.
- Undermine the scheme of open, public and accountable regulations provided for in the existing Fisheries Act.
- Replace the regulation of the fishery through publicly accountable regulations grounded in law and substitute a new scheme of regulation by unaccountable bureaucrats.
- Remove the requirement that everyone in a fishery should face the same set of regulations. There would be no requirement that every fishermen or group of fishermen will face the same set of terms and conditions in their licenses.
- Remove the requirement that regulations governing the fishery must be placed before parliamentary committees for the review.

The existing *Fisheries Act* provides the government with wide powers to make regulations to govern the fishery but such regulations must be published and made available to parliamentary committees for review. Bill C-52 is designed to remove from public scrutiny the regulation of the fishery. It is designed to give bureaucrats unlimited authority to write their own regulations.

“The government does not need these new powers in order operate the fishery,” Cummins concluded. “Bureaucrats merely want the power to operate without public scrutiny.”

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