

The E-Newsletter of the Nova Scotia NDP

Dear New Democrats,

For more than 30 years the fleet separation and owner/operator policies have protected the independence of Nova Scotia's inshore fishing fleets, while helping to maintain good jobs in coastal communities across the province.

As Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and a proud fisherman myself, I recognize that these policies are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's fishing industry and our NDP government supports them.

In recent weeks, many individuals and organizations from all regions have contacted me with concerns over a discussion paper released by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. **The Future of Canada's Commercial Fisheries** speaks about sustainability, economic viability and predictability, but fails to address questions about the fleet separation and owner operator policies.

As I said, I know how important these policies are to the future of Nova Scotia's coastal communities. That is why I took it upon myself to speak directly with Fisheries and Oceans Minister Keith Ashfield.

At a meeting with my provincial and territorial colleagues on Friday, I asked Minister Ashfield to clarify how these long-standing policies fit into the future management of the Atlantic fishery. He has said that he wants to keep the consultation process open to all points of view, however, I believe that Nova Scotians deserve answers to these important questions.

I also expressed my concerns with the current consultation process. Thus far I do not feel this process has adequately allowed fishing communities to provide feedback to the DFO about the future of the fisheries. I have specifically asked Minister Ashfield to extend the March 14 deadline for feedback so all concerned groups and individuals have enough time to have their say.

Rest assured that our NDP government is standing up to Ottawa to protect Nova Scotia's coastal communities and the many people employed in the Atlantic fishery.

Sterling Belliveau