

PRESS RELEASE

## **Political parties unanimously call for changes to West Coast fisheries licence ownership, so more benefits flow locally.**

**May 8 2019, Vancouver, BC** – Today, a much welcomed report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) provided 20 unanimously supported recommendations to government for changing its current management of commercial fisheries in British Columbia. After hearing many testimonies from independent fish harvesters, organizations, industry, and academics, the report “[West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits](#)” clearly identified the lack of transparency around fishing licence and quota ownership that means it is not currently known where the benefits of our fish resources are truly flowing to. Among its recommendations, FOPO called for the setup of a public online database to track the buyers, sellers and sale/lease prices, as well as an end to the sale of fishing quota and licenses to non-Canadians.

Tasha Sutcliffe, Ecotrust Canada’s Senior Advisor on Fisheries states, *“This is a huge step forward for ensuring the benefits from fish in B.C. waters go to B.C. fish harvesters, First Nations and communities. This is a fisheries report but not just a fisheries issue. Every sector from farming to housing needs to have a policy framework that ensures we are not allowing big corporate consolidation and speculative investment of our local assets and resources at a cost to our local economies, local jobs, and community wellbeing.”*

With the Committee made up of MPs from across the Liberal, Conservative and NDP parties, their unanimous support for the recommended changes shows that the current BC fisheries management system is adversely affecting many Canadians. *“In this one report we have all of Canada’s major political parties unanimously calling for the more equitable distribution of Canada’s common resources for the benefit of local communities – it is an unprecedented validation of the diverse fisheries voices calling for change, and just the kind of unity and direction Canada needs to create a more sustainable and equitable future”,* says Chuck Rumsey, Ecotrust Canada CEO.

The FOPO report sheds much needed light on the poor economic performance of the BC fishery compared to Alaska and Atlantic Canada, and on the ways in which current government licensing policies deprive working fishermen, First Nations and fishing communities of fair shares of the wealth generated from publicly owned fish resources. The report provides excellent guidance to the Fisheries Minister to adapt policies proven fair and effective in other jurisdictions, and to develop made-in-BC solutions through collaboration with the BC government, First Nations, and with industry and community interests.

**About Ecotrust Canada**

Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising charity powered by the vision of people and nature thriving together. We develop innovative economic solutions that enable rural and remote communities across Canada to lead in the management of, and benefits from, local resources – from forestry to fisheries to housing and energy. Our on-the-ground work and systems approach is entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical. [ecotrust.ca](http://ecotrust.ca)

**For more information:**

**Sarah Stott** – Communications, Ecotrust Canada

T: 236-333-7087

[sarah@ecotrust.ca](mailto:sarah@ecotrust.ca)