



PRESS RELEASE

CANADA'S FISHERIES MINISTER COMMITS TO IMPROVING THE PACIFIC MANAGEMENT AND LICENSING REGIME

JULY 29, 2020 — We welcome the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) [letter of acknowledgement](#) on the value and relevance of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) report, *West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits*, and its 20 recommendations for revitalizing British Columbia's fisheries policy. Ecotrust Canada engaged actively with this study contributing witness testimonies and research that was included in the report. We are encouraged to see the Federal Government's commitment to using the recommendations as a guide to improve the policies, services, and tools for fisheries on the West Coast to bring them into alignment with the Government's social, cultural, and environmental objectives. The Minister has committed to conducting future consultations on issues raised in the FOPO report with the BC government, Indigenous groups, and harvesters.

While the government's acknowledgement and commitment are a positive step toward change, at Ecotrust Canada we know that there must be concrete action toward enacting the recommendations to truly realize a sustainable fishery that benefits the harvesters and communities reliant on it. Now that the Federal Government understands the problems, and why we need to ensure the benefits from fishing in BC waters flows to fish harvesters and their communities, we must hold the Government to account on following through with the FOPO recommendations. The current BC fisheries system increasingly favours corporate ownership and speculative investment, eroding the many values harvesting seafood brings to our communities — food security, employment, intergenerational knowledge, culture, stewardship, marine management, and well-being. And, as the Minister stated in the letter, while Canada grapples with the global pandemic, it has never been clearer how valuable our fisheries are to our food system and local economy.

Tasha Sutcliffe, Senior Policy Advisor, Ecotrust Canada: *"Here in BC, we can have a fishery that prioritizes conservation while supporting adjacent small communities and fish harvesters — but we need the courage to make the necessary policy change. It's shameful that we would allow our fisheries to turn into Wall Street-like commodities to line a few people's pockets at the expense of the well-being of BC harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities. Atlantic Canada fisheries policy protects the interests of local people and communities, it is time for the Government of Canada and BC Government to step up and prove they believe BC harvesters and communities are just as important as their East Coast counterparts"*

About Ecotrust Canada

Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising charity that works with rural, remote, and Indigenous communities toward building an economy that provides for a healthy and resilient natural environment; sustainable and abundant energy, food, and housing; prosperous and meaningful livelihoods; and vibrant and inclusive cultures. We call this approach [building an economy that provides for life](#). Our on-the-ground work and systems approach is entrepreneurial, partnership-based, and relentlessly practical. ecotrust.ca

For more information:

Shannon Lough – Communications Manager, Ecotrust Canada
T: 250-624-4191 | C: 250-640-4535 | shannon@ecotrust.ca