



Naturally Yours

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October 21, 2020

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
Member of Parliament for South Shore – St. Margaret's
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Jordan:

It has been over a month since the Municipality sent you a letter regarding the extremely volatile and dangerous situation unfolding in St. Mary's Bay, NS. At that time, we stated that if the Federal Government did not take immediate action, we were fearful of what the potential outcome may be. Unfortunately, those fears are being realized as the situation surrounding the lobster fishing industry continues to escalate. Council firmly believes that Indigenous and commercial fishers want meaningful, calm, and honest dialogue and to be represented; they do not want the destructive division that is currently taking place.

You have stated that "The conservation underpins everything we do. Lobster stocks are healthy, DFO will continue to monitor stocks and we will never move forward with a plan that threatens the health of those species." We could not agree more with this statement and reiterate that any plans moving forward must include all those involved to protect this industry, which is the backbone of many Nova Scotian communities. The Federal Government has had over twenty years after the Marshall decision to clearly define the rules and regulations pertaining to Indigenous lobster fishing rights in Nova Scotia. We cannot afford another day to go by without this issue being immediately addressed as the costs are too high - communities are being divided, properties being damaged and people being physically harmed. We respect the rights of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers to lobster fish, but under very defined rules and regulations to protect the sustainability of the industry, our communities, and the way of life for many Nova Scotian families.

We implore you, as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to exercise political courage to bring all parties together and engage in constructive dialogue, in order to reach a just resolution. Action that leads to peace and reconciliation will ensure the sustainability and conservation of the lobster fishing industry now and for generations to come. It is the only way forward.

Sincerely,

Penny Smith
Warden