

For immediate release

## **Federal Government loses bid to block application on fisheries consultation**

***Court application by commercial fishing organizations moves forward to examine the process and consultation on Rights and Reconciliation Agreement (RRA) on fisheries.***

**Shediac, NB November 1, 2023** – The **Coalition of Atlantic and Québec Fishing Organizations** is pleased to see the court application for a judicial review moving forward to examine if the consultation process for the establishment of Rights and Reconciliation Agreements (RRA) is flawed.

The Coalition has asked for real consultations on this issue for many years and for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to enforce science-based regulations on fisheries management.

“Justice Pentney agrees with us that this is a serious question of public interest,” said Bobby Jenkins, president of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen’s Association ([PEIFA](#)). “We need a process and fisheries management plan that benefits ALL the communities who depend on the fishery resource, including Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous commercial fishers that historically depend on fisheries.”

The **Coalition** calls for an immediate halt to the secret negotiations process with First Nations established by the federal government until the court application is heard and a legal decision is made on how a transparent and inclusive consultation process should move forward.

“This current secret process, led by the Federal Government, has created havoc and uncertainty in coastal communities across the region,” said Gordon Beaton, the Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board ([GNSFPB](#)) representative.

“Justice Pentney also notes that *“the scope of the rights recognized by the Marshall decisions has been litigated, but not finally determined”* and that *“the Courts have recognized that Aboriginal and treaty rights are group and site specific.”* They *“must be asserted and proven before a court recognizes and protects them,”* said the Maritime Fishermen’s Union ([MFU](#)) President, Réjean Comeau.

“The decision for the court application to move forward to examine a potentially flawed process followed by the government should be a wake-up call for everyone,” said O’Neil Cloutier, from the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie ([RPPSG](#)). “The Federal Government must consider the interests of both Aboriginal rights holders AND others who rely on the resource. We hope the court application will guide the government on a positive path forward for the benefit of all concerned”.

### **COALITION OF ATLANTIC AND QUÉBEC FISHING ORGANIZATIONS**

*We are a movement of fishermen committed to a sustainable, healthy fishery and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.*

- *Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board (GNSFPB)*
- *Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU)*
- *PEI Fishermen's Association (PEIFA)*
- *Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie (RPPSG)*

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