



LIFO in area 6: ACPG's position and recommendation

Submitted to:

Ministerial advisory panel on LIFO in shrimp fishing area 6

By:

Association des Capitaines Propriétaires de la Gaspésie Inc.

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1- Introduction

The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard launched the Ministerial Advisory Panel to carry out the external review of the Department's Last-In, First-Out policy (LIFO) for the Northern shrimp fishery. The Panel will provide advice on whether LIFO policy specific to the Northern shrimp fishery should be continued, modified or abolished.

The Panel is holding public consultation meetings with fishers, Indigenous peoples, industry and others to hear their views on the LIFO policy. ACPG has made a presentation in Gander on May 26 outlining the Association's position on LIFO. This document sums up what we presented in Gander.

2- The ACPG

The Association des Capitaines Propriétaires de la Gaspésie was founded in 1983 by fishermen seeking to work together to better defend their interests in various issues, to represent them in negotiations and discussions with both the federal and provincial governments, and to organize and provide services to fishermen.

The association now represents approximately 80 members employing more than 300 fishermen all around the Gaspé Peninsula. We estimate that the products harvested by our fishermen create or maintain approximately 500 jobs in fish plants in the area, plus more than 300 other indirect jobs.

Since its foundation in 1983 the ACPG has created, developed and provided numerous services for the benefit of harvesters, including

- Winter storage park for fishing vessels
- Ice making plant
- Manufacturing of trawls and other fishing gear
- ACPG Innovation, the R&D branch of the association

3- Quebec and ACPG members' presence in area 6

Quebec inshore fishermen were awarded shrimp fishing licences in 1997, at the same time as Newfoundland fishermen. As of today, two fishermen from Quebec still own licenses for harvesting coldwater shrimp in area six. Both of them unload their shrimp in Newfoundland, and the shrimp is processed by plants in Newfoundland.

4- Policies and priorities

Our position is that all of DFO's policies, regulations and decisions should

- Prioritize stock conservation above everything else; there is no question in our mind that stock protection has to be the top priority in any regulation or policy related to harvesting of coldwater shrimp or any other fish or seafood. To our knowledge area 6 may be the only coldwater shrimp fishing area in the world where shrimp is harvested year round, because offshore fishing vessels harvest shrimp in area 6 in the winter season; no other shrimp fishing area is facing that kind of harvesting pressure. The actual effects of year-round harvesting on stock conservation have never been scientifically evaluated, but if there is any effect it can only be negative.
- Put emphasis on the long term viability of fishing enterprises: with their ability to harvest shrimp in all fishing areas north of area 6, the offshore companies and vessels can still be very profitable without harvesting any product in area 6. Because the size of their vessels, and because they do not have any inboard freezing capacity, inshore fishermen are practically limited to area 6, whereas offshore boats can, and do, harvest in all other fishing areas north of area 6
- Maximize social and economic benefits for communities: if you take into account harvesting and processing, only a few hundred direct jobs are related to coldwater shrimp offshore fisheries; even if the offshore fleet does not harvest one single shrimp in area 6, most, if not all, of these jobs will still be maintained. Still taking into account only the harvesting and processing jobs, and excluding all indirect jobs and services in Newfoundland communities that depend on income generated by inshore coldwater shrimp harvesting and processing, about 3000 direct jobs are in jeopardy; if LIFO remains, the vast majority of these jobs will disappear, creating a social and economic crisis of almost unheard proportion in northern Newfoundland. It must be noted that if indirect jobs are taken into account the difference between the economic benefits of inshore vs offshore fisheries is even more significant in favour of inshore fisheries.

5- Impact

The impact of the LIFO policy on Newfoundland fishermen, plant workers and rural communities in the actual context of impending (upcoming) quota reductions has been well documented and extensively demonstrated to the panel. Quebec fishermen involved will suffer the same exact fate: if the LIFO policy remains as it now stands, and if inshore fishermen take the bulk of the upcoming quota reductions, our fishermen will be left with no other choice but to cease operations. With such a low quota remaining, and given the amount of the fixed costs that the fishing enterprises have to incur, it will be impossible to continue to harvest shrimp in a profitable way

6- Recommendation

ACPG asks the minister to abolish the LIFO policy in area 6, and award all quotas to inshore fishermen. This is the decision that DFO must make in the best interests of NFLD communities, NFLD and Quebec fishermen, and the industry.

In the last federal election campaign, the now-elected liberal government committed the following to the FFAW:

“ We are committed to reviewing the last in, first out (LIFO) policy for northern shrimp. We believe difficult allocation decisions must be made with broad discussion and consultation with the industry in order to ensure the best possible decisions are reached for the future of the resource, and the maximum benefit for the people and coastal communities who rely on the resource. ”

What we propose is thus totally in line with the Government’s electoral commitment

Patrice Element
Technical Advisor
Association des Capitaines Propriétaires de la Gaspésie Inc.