



FEB 08 2021

Mr. Ronnie LeBlanc
Warden
Municipality of Clare
1185 Highway 1
Little Brook NS B0W 1Z0

Dear Mr. LeBlanc:

Thank you for contacting my office regarding the events in Nova Scotia, and for your kind offer of the use of your facilities to bring Indigenous and commercial harvesters together in the negotiation process. I regret the delay in responding.

I share your concerns, and my first priority continues to be the safety of everyone involved in this issue. Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) fishery officers, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have been coordinating their efforts on the sea, on land, and in the air, and have been working with officials from the Province of Nova Scotia. They continue to monitor the situation. The violence, destruction of property, threats, and intimidation that were witnessed do not advance our goal of reconciliation, nor do they support the further implementation of First Nation treaty rights, or a productive and orderly fishery.

I have been hearing from many stakeholders with clear concerns about conservation and sustainability. I can assure you that lobster stocks are healthy and that DFO will never move forward with a plan that threatens the sustainability of the resource.

We must remember that two common objectives unite everyone involved in the fisheries: first, the long-term sustainability of the resource and ensuring that it is available for generations to come; second, safe and orderly fisheries that are accessible to all harvesters. These two principles guide this department, and I hope that it is through this lens that we can find common ground, and reduce tensions.

Respectful, constructive dialogue between everyone involved in the fisheries is essential to a peaceful resolution. That is why, on October 23, 2020, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and I announced the appointment of Mr. Allister Surette as Federal Special Representative. In this role, he is working with both First Nations and industry to ensure all voices are heard. Separate from the nation-to-nation negotiations between government and First Nations, Mr. Surette is focusing on building long-term communication, cooperation, and understanding across our fisheries. Mr. Surette's experience in successfully settling fisheries disputes will contribute to reducing tensions in the region.

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DFO is committed to renewing its relationship with Indigenous peoples, and recognizes the treaty right to fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood as affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. We will continue to work on a nation-to-nation basis with First Nations leaders on the path forward to further implement their treaty right. Despite my appreciation for your kind offer of the use of your facilities, these negotiations must remain nation-to-nation.

DFO officials and I continue to meet regularly with First Nations and industry representatives. While these meetings are out of the public eye, they remain constructive.

Once again, thank you for contacting my office to share your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bernadette Jordan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

c.c.: Mr. Chris d'Entremont, M.P.
West Nova
The Honourable Keith Colwell, M.L.A.
Nova Scotia's Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
The Honourable Mark Furey, M.L.A.
Nova Scotia's Attorney General and Minister of Justice
The Honourable Gordon Wilson, M.L.A.
Nova Scotia's Minister of Environment
Clare-Digby