



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans**

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FOPO • NUMBER 016 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, April 2, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Rodney Weston**



## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

•(1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)):** I'll call this meeting to order.

I want to thank our guests for being with us today.

We really do appreciate your coming. I apologize. You were here last week and things got delayed. I'm not sure if we're going to have any interruptions today, but such is the business of the House.

Once again, thank you for coming. We certainly look forward to your briefing on the European Union's ban on Canadian seal products and imports. I know you have an opening statement.

Mr. Hildebrand, please proceed.

**Mr. Marvin Hildebrand (Director General, Market Access, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[Translation]

Good afternoon, members of the committee.

My name is Marvin Hildebrand, and I am the director general of the Market Access Bureau at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, or DFATD.

The Market Access Bureau supports Canada's trade challenge before the World Trade Organization, or WTO, concerning the European Union's seal ban. I am here today to provide an update on this trade challenge. DFATD is leading the case, in close collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

I would like to begin with some background information on the WTO challenge and the EU's seal regulation. Then, I will move to the WTO dispute settlement process.

[English]

In 2009, after a concerted campaign by animal rights groups, the EU introduced regulations restricting the importation and marketing

of seal products in the European market. These regulations ban the importation and sale of all seal products except under three narrowly defined circumstances: one, seal products resulting from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities; two, seal products resulting from hunts conducted for the sole purpose of sustainable management of marine resources; and three, seal products imported for personal use by travellers.

To be placed on the market under the first two categories, seal products have to be accompanied by an attestation document from a recognized body confirming that they qualify for one of the exceptions.

Seal products from Canada's east coast commercial fishery do not qualify under either of the first two exemptions. Furthermore, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or ITK, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, or NTL, and the Government of Nunavut have opposed seeking access to the EU market through the indigenous exemption. In their view, the Inuit exemption has little practical value as it would be costly and administratively burdensome to apply, without offering any clear commercial gain. They further indicated that they rely on southern commercial processing and marketing channels as the remoteness of Inuit communities and the small scale of the Inuit hunt mean that it is not economically feasible for them to develop their own processing and distribution channels.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hildebrand, I apologize, but I have to interrupt you. The bells are ringing in the House and there's a vote. As per the Standing Orders, we have to recess at this point in time.

There will be a vote in 30 minutes, and hopefully you'll be able to stay with us and we can return.

Thank you.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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[Committee adjourned to call of the chair]





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