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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald



Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (1630)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 129 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

This meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders.

Before we proceed, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. Please address all comments through the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, September 16, 2024, the committee is resuming its study of the impact of the reopening of the cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

Welcome to the witnesses here today.

On Zoom, we have, from the Nunatsiavut Government, Jim Goudie, deputy minister of lands and natural resources.

Thank you for taking the time to appear. You will have five minutes or less for your opening statement.

Mr. Goudie, the floor is yours.

Mr. James Goudie (Deputy Minister, Lands and Natural Resources, Nunatsiavut Government): Good evening, Mr. Chair and committee members.

My name, as the chair just alluded to, is James Goudie. I'm the deputy minister of lands and natural resources for the Nunatsiavut government. I thank you for the opportunity to present here today.

Cod is more than an economic resource. It's an iconic species for Labrador Inuit. It's central to our way of life, for both sustenance and culture. Therefore, it is crucial that the Nunatsiavut Government is involved in the management of and access to this resource as it recovers.

Over the past three years, we have seen encouraging signs of cod stock recovery in the waters off our shores. Our inshore fishers report positive catches, and we are optimistic about the future of this fishery. While there's still work to be done, we are hopeful these signs will be supported by upcoming assessments and collaborative management efforts.

The Labrador Inuit have been historically excluded from sharing this resource, and we do not support a return to where quotas were distributed without our meaningful participation. It is essential that Inuit and other true and legitimate indigenous groups are given proper recognition and rights to this important resource on a go-forward basis. The Nunatsiavut Government, which represents the only Inuit collective in Atlantic Canada, does not recognize the NunatuKavut Community Council as an indigenous organization, and does not support their involvement in this allocation process. The Nunatsiavut Government and the Innu Nation are the only recognized indigenous governments in Labrador and should be the primary beneficiaries of this resource.

In 2003, inshore cod-affected fishers were offered shrimp allocations in shrimp fishing area 5, which overlaps with our marine zone. With the reopening of the commercial cod fishery, we believe the shrimp quota should be reassigned to the Nunatsiavut Government. This would make a minimum of 11% of the total shrimp quota available to Labrador Inuit fishers, as outlined in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.

The 599.4-tonne cod quota allocated to the Nunatsiavut Government has been 97% landed to inshore plants in this province, benefiting 12 Labrador Inuit fishers and supporting numerous spinoff benefits to inshore plants. While we have landed our cod exclusively using the inshore, we do not believe the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, or Canada, should be able to dictate to the two indigenous groups in Labrador how to land their cod. We appreciate the ability to use the offshore for our quota allocation, should we choose to do so. We have had an excellent collaboration with regional DFO staff in drafting a comprehensive harvesting plan for our cod allocation. This partnership ensures our harvesting practices align with sustainable management principles. We look forward to continuing this productive collaboration.

Based on what we are seeing in our water, we anticipate a positive 2025 stock assessment. Our fishers are seeing good signs of cod recovery, and we are hopeful this trend will be confirmed in the upcoming assessment.

The Nunatsiavut Government is committed to working with the Government of Canada and all stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of this important resource. We look forward to continuing to engage with the standing committee, and we are encouraging a fair and inclusive process that respects the rights and interests of Labrador Inuit and other true indigenous peoples.

Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We'll now go to our first round of questioning.

We'll start off with Mr. Small for six minutes or less.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Mr. Goudie for appearing before this committee.

Mr. Goudie, I might get off on a little tangent here, but right now, raw seal skins and seal products are not permitted to be exported out of Newfoundland and Labrador. That was addressed in a Senate committee report and in a report from this committee here—basically interprovincial trade barriers in seal products and how they reduce our access to harvest seals. Now, 400,000 seals, according to the latest estimate I saw, with a diet of 2.99 tonnes per day, consume over 100 million tonnes of fish, various species throughout the year.

How's that going to impact the growth of the cod biomass?

Mr. James Goudie: I think anyone who lives in Newfoundland and Labrador is well aware of the impact that seal populations have had on cod and will have on cod. We would certainly like to see former markets and/or any other barriers in terms of seal products opened up, which would make seal harvesting more viable in this country. I think that is probably the biggest impediment to what I see is certainly a viable seal industry, once again, in our province.

In terms of the aspects of seal predation on cod, I think that's definitely there. I think anybody who lives in our coastal communities can see it, but I will tell you, as I did in my opening statement, that we have seen a massive increase in cod presence in our waters, certainly in the fall. I will tell you that my father, who is going to turn 83 this year, says that there are places in my hometown where we never caught cod in the past but we can catch them now.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Goudie.

Oceana and Oceans North both submitted written testimony to this committee calling for the capelin fishery to be abolished. The seal population in Atlantic Canada is estimated to consume over a million tonnes of capelin per year, yet somehow Oceana and Oceans North feel that a mere 25,000-tonne capelin fishery in Atlantic Canada is holding back the growth of the cod stock. We're talking about 25,000 tonnes compared to a million tonnes.

Mr. Goudie, do you think that Oceana and Oceans North have a leg to stand on in calling for the demise of the capelin fishery? They're saying that 25,000 tonnes is holding back the recovery of the cod fishery.

Mr. James Goudie: The Nunatsiavut Government is not involved in the capelin fishery in any regard. I appreciate your question, but I reserve the right to say "no comment". I think that, for Newfoundland and Labradorians, seal predation speaks for itself.

• (1640)

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you very much.

My next question is about adjacency.

In terms of adjacency, Mr. Goudie, how adjacent to Nunatsiavut was your recent cod quota harvested?

Mr. James Goudie: It was within the Nunatsiavut marine zone as outlined in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, which is directly adjacent and within 2J.

Mr. Clifford Small: Were those quotas by that inshore fleet caught in 2J?

Mr. James Goudie: Yes, sir.

Mr. Clifford Small: Okay. I know quite a few of those captains, and they told me that they were caught east of Fogo, so am I wrong on that?

Mr. James Goudie: Yes, sir.

Mr. Clifford Small: Oh, okay. I'll have to check back with them again, I guess.

Going forward, do you feel that, at 3.3%, the share of quota for your nation is fair and adequate?

Mr. James Goudie: No, Mr. Small, I don't believe 3.3% is fair or adequate.

Mr. Clifford Small: As time goes on, what's your plan in terms of leasing out that quota? Do you expect to continue to lease that quota to inshore fleets, or do you have a plan to lease that quota to OCI in a similar fashion to what happened with the northern shrimp quota this year?

Mr. James Goudie: I'm not quite sure if you're implying that we leased any shrimp to OCI, which I would consider a false statement. All our shrimp were caught by Nunatsiavut beneficiaries per our designation policy.

In terms of what our plan is, we had hoped to land all of Nunatsiavut's quota in every species with our inshore fishers, but we would like to reserve the right to use the offshore if we need to do so, which we do with our uncaught shrimp if our inshore fishers can't catch it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Small.

We'll now go to Mr. Morrissey for six minutes or less, please.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Goudie, you referenced excellent collaboration with DFO. Here, we often get a different perspective, where there is actually more criticism of how DFO is interacting with various resource groups.

Could you explain a bit more for the committee how your negotiations are going with DFO?

Mr. James Goudie: I think it's more in terms of our collaboration with DFO on the ground with some of the regional managers and regional staff versus any kinds of discussions we might have with fisheries management DFO in Ottawa. Certainly, I'm a skeptic and very vocal on how I feel about fisheries management in general. However, in terms of our actual work with on-the-ground people, we feel like we're certainly being heard. Also with my staff and the technical people who work on our licensing and the management systems, we have an excellent working relationship with them here in Nunatsiavut.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you.

The decision the minister made heading into this season is one that I take it you endorse.

Mr. James Goudie: Aspects of it, I would endorse. We were certainly pleased with the increase in quota from what we had seen in the stewardship fishery. There are other aspects of her decision that we certainly weren't happy with. I think that was touched on somewhat in my opening statement.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: For the benefit of the committee, could you give a comparison between how you proceeded this year versus for the stewardship fishery, which you referenced, in the past?

Mr. James Goudie: I won't go into tonnage, because I have staff who tell me that, but we had a massive increase in our overall quota from the stewardship fishery to our current fishery.

• (1645)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: How would that have economically impacted you in the communities that benefited from that?

Mr. James Goudie: Traditionally, we used to designate, under our designation system, only one fisher to fish cod quota. This year, we were eligible to designate 12. Unfortunately, the announcement was somewhat unexpected for us in terms of ramping up the production capabilities of the only plant we would land at, so we're hoping to do that in 2025. Plants in other parts of the province benefited from the allocation to the Nunatsiavut Government.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay.

You referenced that your fishers are telling you that there are good signs of a cod recovery. Could you expand on that, Mr. Goudie?

Mr. James Goudie: Yes. Those are just based on general conversations and observations from our designated fishers in our fleet that there was certainly an increase in the cod stocks. It's getting easier to catch the fish you need to catch, and we landed 97%. Our last fisher...essentially it boiled down to having two big hooks, so we couldn't land 100%.

However, even in local traditional knowledge, just from our cultural activities, we know cod stocks have increased significantly in Nunatsiavut waters.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Could you explain what fishing method you're using to catch your quota? What gear type do you use?

Mr. James Goudie: I think it's predominantly gillnets. Again, I have technical people to work with me on that.

There's also hook and line. One of our fishers had a hook-and-line system set up, which didn't work out too well, unfortunately.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Goudie, you referenced a "fair" process. You were expecting a fair process going forward. For the benefit of the committee, could you elaborate a bit on how you would perceive or view a fair process for the fishers you represent?

Mr. James Goudie: Absolutely.

I think one thing that's forgotten by a lot of these online sleuths and others involved in the fishery is that when the cod moratorium was put in place, there was no Labrador Inuit land claim agreement.

There are certain stipulations in there that we expect from the Canadian government in terms of consultation and engagement on any fishery species that might be adjacent to or within Nunatsiavut waters: early engagement and certainly what we think is a fair and equitable treatment of our rights in our waters for those fishery stocks adjacent to us. I think that in terms of cod, DFO did a somewhat better job than in some of the other fishery species in terms of contacting us early. We hope that that continues.

We don't see, historically, that what cod was allocated was fair, nor does it represent the current situation of the Canadian government or the reality of Canada in terms of land claim agreements, which have advanced since that time.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

We will now go to Madame Desbiens for six minutes or less, please.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witness for being here. Once again, the witnesses are teaching us a lot.

From what you say, Mr. Goudie, you have a good relationship with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, or DFO, and it listens to you.

We've had witnesses come before us and talk about a system in which fishers would be involved in all aspects of the fishery. Those witnesses were in favour of including fishers in the management system.

Is that a possibility on your end, according to the people you represent?

[English]

Mr. James Goudie: Thank you, Vice-Chair, for your question.

As far as I know, in terms of all aspects of the process we were involved in.... If there were pieces of the process that I am not aware of, then we weren't involved in them, but I do believe that we were involved in all those processes. DFO did reach out early, and we discussed with them what we thought a future cod fishery should look like in Nunatsiavut and in the rest of the province.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: You said earlier that, if the fishery stock became more abundant, you could call on offshore fishers. If I understand correctly, in principle, the type of fishing you do relies on inshore fishers rather than offshore ones. Is that correct?

[English]

Mr. James Goudie: No. Our goal in all fishery species we harvest is to fish inshore. What we would like is to reserve the right to fish offshore if, for some reason, we don't land all of our quota, or if we have issues with our inshore fishermen in terms of being able to get out there. I mean, Labrador is not a very easy place to fish. We don't want to leave the fish in the water in any regard.

We currently have a system with shrimp where, if our inshore fishermen cannot land it all, then we sell it to the offshore. Some years it's very high, and some years it's very low. Fortunately for us, we landed 97% of our cod allocation inshore. We hope to land 100% of it inshore in 2025, pending any decisions made by the minister in the future.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: I want to make sure I understand. We're told that, in the past, the offshore style of fishing caused a lot of damage to the biomass. That has been proven. Ideally, the goal is to have more inshore fishers, better profitability and better access to quotas without using offshore fishers. Based on what we've heard at committee, offshore fishers are not welcome in the cod fishery recovery system. We know the history of that type of fishing, which caused a lot of damage to the biomass.

I understand that you want to reserve the right to use offshore fishers if you see that you won't be able to reach the fish quota. Although you don't actually like this type of fishing, you do see it as a tremendous economic opportunity. Is that correct?

[English]

Mr. James Goudie: I think it would be a good economic decision for the Nunatsiavut Government on any quota that might be allocated that's left in the water and that our inshore fishermen would not be able to catch. Again, the goal for us is to fish all of our cod inshore.

There are other indigenous groups who aren't set up to fish as easily as we or other fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec are. What would happen to their quota allocation if they couldn't fish it inshore? We think that we and the other true, legitimate indigenous groups in Newfoundland and Labrador should be guaranteed our access, regardless of how we fish it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Goudie. That's helpful.

The Bloc Québécois recently held a fishery forum in Caraquet with fishers from the Maritimes. We were told that there was also cod further south in the gulf.

Have you heard the same thing, that there is plenty of cod in the gulf right now?

[English]

Mr. James Goudie: No, Vice-Chair, I have not heard that. I can only testify to what I know is happening within Nunatsiavut and our waters, and I can tell you there has been a significant abundance of cod over the last three years.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Collins for six minutes or less, please.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witness for being here with us today.

I want to start off by saying I'm a British Columbian member of Parliament, so I know a bit about the importance of wild salmon to first nations all along our coast. We know that 90% of first nations in B.C. rely on wild salmon for food and social and ceremonial purposes. It is an iconic species. It has a deep and significant place in the culture and practices of first nations in British Columbia.

You touched on this a bit in your opening statement, but can you talk a bit more about the importance of cod to the people of Nunatsiavut?

• (1655)

Mr. James Goudie: Yes, cod is certainly one of those staple species for us. Arctic salmon and Arctic char are as well. Cod is one of the species we've fished from time immemorial, before our interactions with the Vikings, long before Christopher Columbus and long before any other western people came to our shores.

It is intrinsic to who we are as a people, the same as with polar bears, caribou and everything else. It's hard to put into words, in a western sense, what that cultural connection is. It's often difficult for me to do that, but we have a relationship with cod. We've always had a relationship with cod, and we certainly want to be involved in any kind of management measures and fisheries that involve cod from now and going into the future.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Can you describe a bit the impacts of the moratorium in 1992?

Mr. James Goudie: I'm the son of a fisherman. The impacts were the same as they were on the island portion of Newfoundland. Certainly, there was a question of the viability, the future and living in the region. Nunatsiavut has much less investment from the province or the Government of Canada in infrastructure and other things. We're completely isolated. There are no roads going into Nunatsiavut. There was a question of how the economy of northern Labrador was going to go forward.

This was before the land claims agreements. Fortunately for us, the largest nickel mine in the world just happened to be around the corner, and land claims just happened to be around the corner, but there was a lot of outward migration and a lot of mass.... I guess the economic standards dropped, and we're still below the provincial average in the poverty level and other social and economic factors.

Ms. Laurel Collins: You've spoken a bit about how you do most of your fishing inshore, but for the part that can't be captured in there, you want the right to be able to go offshore to do that. That makes sense, given your historical and ongoing relationships with the land, the land claims agreements that you have and the government's provincial and federal obligations to indigenous peoples.

I'm curious; when it comes to that other allocation, the 6% share for non-indigenous offshore fishing, do you have a position on that?

Mr. James Goudie: No. We have no position on that. Again, we would want to have the right to use the offshore, if we could. Obviously, the offshore would [*Inaudible—Editor*] some sort of allocation in order to be able to just switch into fishing someone else's quota. I'm not sure the actual...because I've seen different things in terms of the NAFO piece. I know that the stewardship fishery certainly was good for inshore fishermen, but if you're another NAFO member outside of Canada, you're seeing this stewardship fishery that was, I believe, although I could be wrong, the largest stewardship fishery anywhere in the world. I certainly understand the Canadian offshore being somewhat disgruntled if NAFO offshore can fish and they can't. I understand that argument of it.

In terms of whether or not we support the offshore, there's no comment there in terms of the Nunatsiavut Government. There's no position there. But we do realize that if we had decided to fish all our quota allocation offshore, there would have to be an offshore component willing to do that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks for that clarity.

We have also heard a little bit about early closures. There was a report that on November 13, DFO closed 2J, 3K and 3L fishing areas to licence-holders fishing on the Nunatsiavut Government indigenous allocation using fixed gear. Can you confirm whether that is correct?

• (1700)

Mr. James Goudie: Yes. From the briefing from my staff, I believe that is correct.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Is this something that you expected? How early is this closure? Are you drawing any conclusions about the fishery from this closure?

Mr. James Goudie: It wasn't unexpected. At that point, again, if you look at our numbers, we had already caught the majority of our

quota, or almost all of it. In terms of concern, there's no concern at this point in terms of that closure date or how it would have impacted us.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks so much.

The Chair: Ms. Collins, you're doing well representing Ms. Barron. You went over time a little bit, and Ms. Barron is good at that.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Arnold for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for being here with us today, sir.

I believe you said in your opening remarks or in one of your answers that there were aspects of the cod opening decision that you weren't happy with or that your group wasn't happy with. Can you elaborate a little further on what it was you weren't happy with?

Mr. James Goudie: Absolutely. We were concerned with what was called the special allocation or special allotment to the NunatuKavut Community Council. We feel that this is an indigenous allotment by any other name. We therefore feel that certainly half of whatever they were allocated—I believe it was the exact same as us, so 3.3%—should have been split and then offered to us and the Innu Nation.

There are a significant number of licence-holders still in southern Labrador. We believe the allocation should have been the same as it was in the other parts of the province to those licence-holders, but any special allocation should have just been split and given to us under our indigenous allocations, as well as the Innu Nation.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Help me clarify in my mind how it worked. There were general allocations of quota. Then there was this special allocation or special allotment to another group that you didn't get part of. Is that correct, or was that other allotment to match what your group got?

Mr. James Goudie: I think that the only one who can answer that question for sure is the fisheries minister but, yes, there was an allotment for the two indigenous groups—the Innu Nation and us, the Nunatsiavut Government—which was 3.3%, then there was a special allotment to the NunatuKavut Community Council of the same amount of quota, and then the rest was disbursed as per the general guidelines.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Were you provided any explanation as to why that other special allotment went to one group and not to your group as well?

Mr. James Goudie: No, sir. I would love to know what a “special allotment” is and whether I could get some for all of the other species that we fish.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Okay. Thank you.

You also mentioned that one of your harvesters had a hook-and-line system that did not work well. Can you explain why it didn't work well? We heard other anecdotal reports that the longline fishery worked really well and the quality of catch was better.

Mr. James Goudie: In a condensed nutshell, his hooks were too big. He was using a system that was, essentially, for turbot, and he thought he'd try it out to see how it worked for cod.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Okay. Thank you.

Now, on inshore versus offshore, you mentioned that you believe you should have the right to harvest in the area adjacent to your territory. Is the offshore fishery adjacent?

Mr. James Goudie: I can't give a correct answer in terms of where the offshore would have fished that quota allocation if we had decided to go that route.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

I turn it over to Mr. Small for the remainder of my time. I believe he has another question or two.

• (1705)

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

I have a question for Mr. Goudie about the current assessment that's began with the bottom trawl survey. I'll just hold up the map right here. There's all this inshore area here that goes from the mid-Labrador coast all the way down along the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador within a mile of the land—what we call, back home, “in around the rocks”. I'm hearing tremendous reports of northern cod being reported by guys who are out hunting seabirds or whatnot. They're seeing this codfish acoustically.

In the meantime, the offshore survey is taking place out here, in this shaded area, at the exact same time as this massive amount of codfish is being reported in the very nearshore zones, so how accurate do you think the cod survey is? How accurate can the results be, when we have this massive amount of fish being reported very nearshore while the DFO survey is taking place 50 to 100 miles offshore?

The Chair: Give a very short answer, please, because all the time allocated has expired and we have gone over.

Mr. James Goudie: Mr. Small, I think you're absolutely right. There are significant portions of the cod quota that are probably missing. We also voiced our concerns to DFO, and we had our initial thoughts that DFO should proceed with caution and with conservation in mind. I have my own concerns about most of the fishery stock analysis and research done for all species, and I voiced that to DFO multiple times.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. It's just a quick point of clarification. I'm a guest to the committee. In our committee, we're not allowed to hold up things and point to them onscreen. I just want to see whether there's a different.... I apologize. I really don't want to cut off Mr. Small or interrupt. I think he was making a valid point. I just want to make sure that we're following procedure.

The Chair: I don't think it's abnormal for somebody in this committee to hold up a map when we're talking about different zones, so the guests will know what the question is about. Other than that, we're not waving the flag or anything.

It's Mr. Small's time. During that particular time, he can do with that time as he wishes. He can play tiddlywinks if he wants to, and I'm not going to stop him—he won't win, but he can play it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We now go to Mr. Kelloway for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Well, that's a hard position to follow from.

First and foremost, Mr. Goudie, thank you for being here.

I also want to welcome MP Lightbound, MP Collins and MP McCauley.

There are a couple of things before I go to you with questions. One thing that I think tends to get lost in a lot of this is that this is a good-news story for Newfoundland and Labrador. After 30-plus years of not fishing northern cod, this is an amazing story with respect to the rebound of the fishery over a long period of time and the suffering, the tenacity and the patience of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We felt the moratorium in Cape Breton back in the early nineties. Lots of men and women fishers and their families went through an incredible ordeal.

That said, I want to talk a little bit about.... When we're done with the study, which will be today, we will meet in in camera sessions to discuss the report, and we'll be here to discuss recommendations that go in the report. Mr. Goudie, I think you started it off very well in your opening remarks in terms of where the recommendations would go, but I want to give you an opportunity to hold the pen right now and write some recommendations or, in this case, talk to us about what you would want to see in a report from this committee. That's the first question.

The second question I'm very interested in is about the economic impact of this quota allotment. I'm wondering if you can speak to that. You also mentioned future allotments. This might be in your recommendations, but what kind of economic impact would that bring? I think both you and MP Collins talked about the cultural and historical significance. I'm wondering if you could talk about the economics of it as well.

• (1710)

Mr. James Goudie: I guess for the first part of your question, I'll say the same thing I told DFO at the very first meeting I had with them, which is that I want it all, 100% of everything in 2J3KL, you name it. They told me I was crazy and started laughing at me, but I was dead serious. For 150 years.... My great-grandfather was the steward of the Newfoundland fleets when they came up this way. Let's give it all to us. We'll share some with the Innu. And then, in 150 years' time, let's have this conversation again, and then we'll all talk about sharing it once upon a time.

The resources that are off the Nunatsiavut coast aren't benefiting the Nunatsiavut people the way they should be. The same can be said for turbot. The same can be said for shrimp. The same can be said for crab. I don't understand why we're not here having a meeting about shrimp and the offshore—but hey, that's just me. We're the only ones who fish it inshore.

That being said, on the economic impact for this year, obviously, we went from one designated fisherman to 12. All of those small communities are 100% isolated. There are no roads, so it's just fly in, fly out, or ferry it in, in summertime. That's a major impact to even the grocery store there.

Hopefully next year, the plant that processes our turbot and crab will be able to process the cod as well. That should somewhat extend either the overall workforce or the season, so you have more dollars pouring into that community in particular. I would like to see more designated fishermen in smaller vessels so that they can go out on day trips to fish and then land to the plant. We're hoping that'll have a massive economic impact as we can designate more people to fish cod under the allocations that we get.

In terms of the dollar figure, I can't give that to you right now. There are lots of things that need to be assessed and brought forward to me. However, the cod allocations that we do get from the federal minister are certainly having and will have an impact on the economy in Nunatsiavut.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: You mentioned the ability to go from inshore to offshore, or both. I'm just curious about the ability to do that. Do you have the vessels to do that? Do you have arrangements made? Can you unpack that a bit for us here on committee?

Mr. James Goudie: Yes. In order for us to have the ability to do that, we would essentially lease to the offshore. It would be a big offshore player. In regard to cod—and there are probably people on this panel who can correct me if I'm wrong—I think at this point OCI is probably the major player in groundfish species offshore.

We haven't delved into that too much, because we didn't need to. We fished it inshore. However, again, we want to reserve the right if we decide to do that or if we have problems. It's the prerogative of the Nunatsiavut Government and our cabinet to see an inshore fishery. However, we certainly don't want to see fish left in the water that we could help build our economy on, and/or the quota distributed elsewhere if we're not able to fish it. We don't think that's fair. We don't think the fishery in the past for Labrador Inuit was fair. We certainly don't think it's fair to the other indigenous group, who aren't quite as set up as we are to have that inshore fishery piece.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kelloway.

We'll now go to Madame Desbiens for two and a half minutes or less.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Earlier, you said that you didn't have a lot of trust in DFO science. At the forum we held last week in Caraquet, we were told that

there was a difference between the measurements taken by DFO and those taken by fishers on the ground.

Do you agree that greater consideration should be given to the scientific data of fishers who are on the front lines and who may be in a better position to assess the biomass and the presence of fish stocks on a daily basis? DFO often takes its measurements at the same place, even though the fish stocks move around. That is more or less what people criticized at the end of last week. Would you agree?

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. James Goudie: I think I got the translation right. For clarification, is that in terms of guiding DFO in their way of thinking?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: What people criticized at our forum last week is that DFO takes its measurements at the same place on the same date, when it is well known that fish behave differently based on different variables and move around. They could be found elsewhere if measurements were taken at different places. DFO is criticized for sticking to the same approach when it should perhaps lean more towards what fishers themselves observe.

Are you seeing the same thing where you're from?

[*English*]

Mr. James Goudie: Madam Vice-Chair, I don't disagree with you. I certainly think that, if I could guide DFO in any way, I would be exercising that power of persuasion every day of my life, because it doesn't seem as if DFO listens to me in any other aspect of my conversations with them.

I absolutely agree that DFO should be more flexible. I think there needs to be more work done on all species, not just cod—certainly in the Labrador Sea.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Collins for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks again to the witness.

I have a question about the special allocation. You mentioned that it should go to the true indigenous nations and be split between the two. Have you received a response from the government about your criticisms, or about suggestions on how the special allocation seems unfair?

Mr. James Goudie: No, I have not, in terms of a formal response. There have been conversations with DFO. Some DFO staff say, “We have always treated them as an indigenous group, so this is why they have a special allocation.”

Ms. Laurel Collins: If they are treated like an indigenous group, wouldn't the government put them into the indigenous allocation? I'm curious. Have you lodged formal complaints with the government? Are you still waiting for a response from them?

Mr. James Goudie: At this point, we haven't lodged any formal complaints. The reason it's a special allocation, and not termed an indigenous allocation, is that the two indigenous organizations in Labrador do not recognize this as an indigenous collective in any way. It's certainly not an Inuit group. The national Inuit organization and all four of the land claims organizations that represent Inuit in Canada do not recognize this as an Inuit group.

I assume this is the minister doing her part in terms of trying to appease everyone without creating greater controversy between the two indigenous groups in Labrador.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I only have a few seconds left, so I'll end with a comment.

It seems as if it should be up to indigenous communities to decide who is included as an indigenous group. I hope your voice is heard by the government.

The Chair: I want to say thank you to Mr. Goudie for appearing before committee today and for testifying and answering all those wonderful questions.

We're going to suspend now to set up for our next panel.

I want to say a big welcome to Ms. Collins, who is representing Ms. Barron here today, and to Mr. Lightbound, who's filling in for Mr. Cormier, I believe.

Also, welcome, Mr. McCauley. You can pass that on to Mr. Genuis as well. It was good to have him here for the few minutes that he was here. You don't have to, if you don't want to. You can take all the praise yourself.

Again, we'll suspend for a few minutes now to switch out panels.

● (1715) _____ (Pause) _____

● (1720)

The Chair: Welcome back.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 8, 2024, the committee is resuming its study on the review of the Fisheries Act.

Welcome to our witnesses in the room.

From the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, we have Tim Kennedy, president; and Mia Parker, executive board member. Also with us is Francis Bradley, president and chief executive officer for Electricity Canada.

Thank you for taking the time to appear today. You will each have five minutes or less for opening statements.

For the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, I believe Mr. Kennedy will do the opening statement.

You have the floor for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Tim Kennedy (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, members of the committee.

The more than 60 companies and 17,000 people working in the aquaculture sector whom I'm representing here today are directly engaged in almost all of the issues this committee addresses, so we are grateful for the opportunity to share our views with you. I think it's been many years for us.

For most Canadians, the aquaculture sector is out of sight and out of mind. They enjoy our oysters, our mussels and our Atlantic salmon but rarely link them all back to our farms or the people who work there. However, we are, indeed, farmers, and just like farmers raising cattle, sheep or pigs, we raise our animals from their earliest life stages and feed them, care for them and bring them to markets across Canada and the world. We raise our animals in water, but we are farmers just the same.

Right now, over 50% of the world's seafood is raised through farms. We are the path to growth for seafood production. With the longest coastline in the world, Canada has the opportunity to be a global leader for job creation, affordable food production and sustainable food security for Canadians. In many countries, our competitors operate under the auspices of national aquaculture legislation that provides support and operational certainty for farmers. In Canada, the only reference to aquaculture in a federal statute is in the Bank Act.

No, Mr. Chair, that is not a typo. The Bank Act does actually define “aquaculture”—inaccurately, I might add—and confirms that aquaculture operators may use their infrastructure and fish as security for bank loans. Beyond that, federal statutes are silent with respect to our industry, in a way that is completely out of step with how Parliament considers almost every other part of the agriculture sector and the industry more generally.

This situation presents considerable challenges for our sector. It creates an atmosphere of uncertainty for our operations and investments. It creates an uneven playing field across Canada and puts far too much discretion in the hands of ministers and bureaucrats, and it deprives aquaculture of the support and clarity that the rest of the agriculture sector enjoys across Canada.

This situation needs to change. In the longer term, Canada needs purpose-built modern national aquaculture legislation that is centred on our role as food producers. In the more immediate term, we believe that five minor changes to the Fisheries Act could start the legislative ball rolling and position the government to more effectively support and steward the sector.

First, we believe that aquaculture needs to be properly defined in law. It would be helpful to include a definition in the Fisheries Act along these lines: “aquaculture is a form of agricultural production designed to produce food and/or food products for human and/or animal consumption and includes the rearing of privately owned plants and animals in captivity throughout their life cycle.” This would provide clarity and certainty for the sector and for DFO efforts to regulate it.

Second, we believe the word “aquaculture”, defined appropriately, should be added to the list of topics in section 43, which deals with regulations. This would allow for the design of regulations specifically focused on aquaculture directly, rather than via the current backdoor approach using regulatory structures designed for other purposes.

Third, the act should be revised to direct the minister to develop a precautionary approach policy or framework specific to aquaculture. Unsurprisingly, the act is designed to bring the precautionary approach to bear with respect to commercial fisheries and related habitat concerns. This approach is not suitable for the regulation of the site-based, high-technology operations of our sector. A more realistic and appropriate approach is needed and should be guided by law, not by ministerial or bureaucratic whims or inclinations.

Fourth, given that aquaculture is a form of agriculture, the act should be revised to drive collaboration between DFO and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the agriculture governance system more generally. Ultimately, we would like to see AAFC assuming a mandate for aquaculture in a way that would lead to more effective federal support for the sector and remove the perceived conflict of interest in the current DFO position with respect to our sector.

Fifth, on a note that applies beyond just the aquaculture domain, we strongly believe that the act should be modernized to increase decision-making transparency and transform the current black-box approach the minister and DFO utilize. It's essential that all Canadians and, certainly, our sector are aware of the scientific data and information the minister uses in making decisions with respect to them. A Fisheries Act amendment requiring the minister to publicly share such information would dramatically increase decision-making integrity and credibility and focus debates on real issues rather than political posturing.

• (1725)

Mr. Chairman, our sector is a heavily regulated, technology-driven and ecologically sustainable industry of vital importance to the economic and social well-being of coastal and rural communities across Canada. There is tremendous opportunity ahead, despite the unfortunate and unnecessary headwinds at present. It needs and deserves a more constructive, predictable and fair legislative base than the Government of Canada has put in place to date. Our five recommendations would be important first steps in this regard, and I would of course be more than happy to address any of them in more depth with the committee here today.

Thanks very much for your time.

• (1730)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

We'll now go to Mr. Bradley, for five minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Bradley (President and Chief Executive Officer, Electricity Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Francis Bradley, and I am the president and CEO of Electricity Canada. Thank you for the invitation to appear before you today as part of your study on the Fisheries Act.

Electricity Canada is an association that represents the country's power companies, the companies that generate, transport and distribute electricity in every province and territory in the country.

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, let me start by cutting to the chase. The fundamental issue is that we now have a fish act, not a fisheries act.

First, let me put this in context. Canada is experiencing a rapid increase in electricity demand. We expect demand for electricity to double or triple by 2050, and to meet this, we need to build at a pace not seen since the 1950s. According to the Canada Energy Regulator, this will require increasing hydroelectric generation by more than 25%. To do this, we need a regulatory environment that is predictable, and it's urgent.

As it stands now, the Fisheries Act does not offer this. The 2019 changes to the act shifted the focus from protecting fisheries to a narrow focus on individual fish. This has resulted in project delays and increased costs to Canadians, without significant benefits to fisheries. When the changes were originally debated, our industry raised concerns that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans would be overwhelmed with an influx of applications for FAAs, Fisheries Act authorizations. This has been the case, and the department has not been resourced adequately to manage the volume of applications.

It was suggested that, prior to implementing the changes, a pathway to compliance be developed alongside alternative compliance mechanisms. Unfortunately, here we are, five years later, and key regulations and guidance materials have not been developed and no clear pathway has been established for the hundreds of facilities that became non-compliant overnight. How did they become non-compliant overnight? It's because they were designed to protect fisheries, not individual fish.

Some of our members have more than 100 years of experience operating their hydroelectric infrastructure. They take every possible step to be responsible stewards of the local fisheries, from the design of their facilities to developing best practices and entering into local conservation partnerships. They have time-tested processes to mitigate the impacts of routine, low-level projects. Fisheries Act authorizations should be reserved for activities that have a higher potential for adverse impacts.

We have always worked and will always work collaboratively with government to find solutions. In fact, right now, our stewardship committee is in Ottawa for a workshop with the DFO on ways to improve the implementation of the act. While these engagements are necessary for productive industry-government collaboration, we need to get moving on improving the regulatory environment if we want to meet our climate and economic goals.

To enhance regulatory certainty, promote the sustainability of fisheries and better enable economy-wide electrification, we recommend, first, that the purpose of the Fisheries Act should be restored to the protection of fisheries instead of individual fish. This ecosystem approach would be in line with the original intention of the act and allow DFO officials to set reasonable and realistic targets based on the resources they have available. This can be achieved through modest amendments to the act or the development of an electricity-specific regulation that reflects the unique realities of our sector.

Second, the minister should issue an operational directive with guidance to the department on the development of compliance mechanisms for low-risk, routine activities. This will ease the burden on the department, as well as improve implementation for the industry.

Finally, DFO should continue to work to implement the cabinet directive on regulatory and permitting efficiency for clean growth projects. Taking a cross-government approach is how we will achieve the regulatory harmony and efficiency we need to get critical clean electricity projects built.

To conclude, it's the impacts of climate change that present the most existential threat to fisheries. Getting clean electricity infrastructure built is critical to reducing our emissions and mitigating these impacts, ultimately protecting Canadians and fisheries.

Mr. Chair, you will find in the brief that we presented 11 specific recommendations in appendix B.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today.

● (1735)

The Chair: Thank you. You cut your time pretty close.

We'll now go to Mr. Small for six minutes or less for questions, please.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Kennedy, do threats exist to existing aquaculture or future expansion of aquaculture from things associated with the current government's commitment to 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 in terms of marine protected areas or national marine conservation areas?

Is there any threat posed to aquaculture by those initiatives?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I would say yes. One area that we're particularly concerned about is the south coast of Newfoundland—your province—where a very large national marine conservation area has been proposed. This is exactly where the potential for salmon farming exists in Newfoundland. Under NMCA rules, there really is zero economic activity. It's very clear that, for instance, salmon farming and other aquaculture activities are not permitted in those areas.

Mr. Clifford Small: You referenced the expansion of salmon farming in that area, the south coast of Newfoundland. Can you put a dollar value on any kind of an estimate, investment-wise, in that area?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I would say that, generally, the opportunity is in the many hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you.

How does Canada stack up in terms of farmed salmon production, compared to, say, Norway or the Faroe Islands?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: In 2018, our peak was 148,000 tonnes of Atlantic salmon produced. As a comparison, last year, in 2023, with cuts in British Columbia, we're at about 89,000 tonnes. We haven't been that low in terms of our salmon production in the country since 2002.

To compare it to Norway, Norway has a goal of increasing the value from the salmon sector five times by 2050, and it produces about 1.5 million tonnes of salmon.

One other example I'd like to bring up is the Faroe Islands. They are a very small North Atlantic set of islands between Shetland and Iceland. Basically, they have 1,000 kilometres of coastline, compared to Canada's 80,000 kilometres of coastline. They now produce the same amount of salmon as all of Canada.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Kennedy, why is there this disparity between Canada and advanced ecological stewards of the environment like Norway, for example?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: From a very early time.... When Norway started salmon farming in the 1960s, it was started as a response to the decline of wild stocks. They were seeing communities throughout Norway really struggling with a lot of poverty, and they started experimenting with salmon farming. They found that this was bringing communities back to life. The country got behind salmon farming.

In Canada, as I said in my comments, we actually don't have any federal legislation that even mentions the word "aquaculture" or "seafood farming", for instance. We have not had the leadership in this country to embrace the future of seafood production, which is both wild and farmed.

Mr. Clifford Small: Should the salmon farming industry in British Columbia completely shut down, what would be the effect on Canadian consumers and possibly on the carbon footprint of salmon that they'll consume? I'm assuming they'll continue to consume it.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: On the global market for salmon.... Let me say first that salmon is the top choice of Canadians for seafood. There's no question about it. It's fresh Atlantic salmon, by a considerable margin. Salmon is the first choice. Shrimp would come second. Other species are actually quite far down. I think that's a really important realization. As much as we would like to grow more diversity with other products, what Canadians and North Americans want is more salmon.

The global market for salmon production is quite tight. When you take out 80,000 tonnes of salmon from British Columbia, for instance, what you're doing is spiking the price. You're limiting the access of Canadians to Canadian-grown salmon, first of all, but also to salmon in general.

Where do you get that salmon? You're going to get salmon from Chile. You're going to get salmon from Norway. What that immediately does, obviously, is change the price, but it also immediately boosts the carbon footprint, because how do you get that salmon? You're air-freighting it into the country. Our estimate, with just the reductions that have happened in British Columbia to date, reducing salmon production by 35,000 tonnes, is that what you're looking at is actually adding about 90,000 gas cars on the roads. That's the carbon equivalent: 90,000 cars.

From a climate, health, Canadian supply and food security perspective, it really doesn't make sense that we're shutting down these salmon farms.

● (1740)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Small.

We'll now go to Mr. Weiler for six minutes or less, please.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank our witnesses for appearing here today. It sounds like it's the first time in a long time. Welcome back.

I want to pick up on one of the points that Mr. Kennedy made on the recommendation to include a definition of aquaculture within the Fisheries Act. I was hoping you might be able to share with this committee what you might see as the priority: Is it having a definition within the Fisheries Act, or would it be better suited to have a stand-alone federal aquaculture act to serve the same purposes?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Certainly, the discussion around an aquaculture act has been around for many years. We know that some work has been done by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In fact, from what we have seen in terms of drafts and draft directions, we're frankly not very impressed by it. That's why we think another department, like Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, should really be the lead for this particular initiative around legislation.

You know, Mr. Weiler, how long it takes to get legislation through the parliamentary system. We actually don't have an aquaculture act, so we do think that although even changes that we

might be considering for the Fisheries Act would take a very long time, they're much more precise. I think that would be a good first step: to get something into the Fisheries Act.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you.

As well, I want to pick up on a point you made there about the interest in having Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as the lead. You also mentioned in your opening the challenges you have now, where DFO is both advocating for the sector and being the regulator for the sector. Could you speak to that conflict and why separating those responsibilities would be an effective way to move forward, not just on things like legislation, but also in terms of those general roles?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Let me start by saying that since 2002, basically, the aquaculture production in Canada has largely flatlined. It's been flat. For over 20 years, we've had largely flat aquaculture production. Value has increased over time, but in terms of quantity, it's basically been flat.

I think DFO, if they're an advocate of our sector, have done a really bad job. I'll just start there. We actually have not experienced DFO as a proper advocate in any way, but there is certainly a perception, especially in British Columbia in the activist community, that there is this conflict around development and regulation. We accept that. We think it is time to address that, and it's not a difficult change. It's really a structural change within the government that has to change that mandate around Agriculture Canada for development purposes.

I just think that addressing that perception within a certain community of the country is important. I think that's something we would really support. It's time to do that.

● (1745)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you very much.

Next, I want to turn to Mr. Bradley.

In your opening remarks, you mentioned some of the projected growth in the hydro sector and some of the limitations you've identified with the Fisheries Act. I want to talk about some other parts of the renewable energy space, both offshore wind and tidal energy. I'm wondering if you're seeing any impediments to the development of those industries, especially now with the changes in Atlantic Canada. Are there changes to the Fisheries Act that are necessary to enable growth in those spaces as well?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Thank you for a very interesting question.

First and foremost, yes, the potential impacts of the Fisheries Act, particularly as it is now more of a fish act, certainly go beyond hydroelectric facilities. It has the potential to impact any electricity facility that makes use of water. That can include a wide variety of technologies, such as nuclear facilities that actually make use of water, tidal facilities and so on.

There's another aspect to this as well. One of the reasons that we tend to focus first on hydro and on hydro facilities in this conversation is that... When we project forward to a 2050 scenario, regardless of whose scenario you're looking at, it will be what we refer to as an “all of the above” approach to meeting our electrification and decarbonization needs. In the future, there will be things such as offshore wind, tidal power, onshore wind and so on. However, hydro will play an absolutely critical role in being able to backstop those technologies. Yes, we need to focus on what we can do to build out more wind, more tidal and so on, but we also need to make sure that we expand the hydro system so that it can backstop those new technologies. Therefore, on the days when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, we would still be able to meet the needs of customers in a way that doesn't have a significant impact on the environment.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I know I have limited time, but I have one last question.

You mentioned the challenge about the Fisheries Act authorizations being overwhelmed. Is that just a resourcing issue—because I hear about it in all other sectors as well—or is it that changes to the act or to the regulations are necessary in order to enable quicker authorizations?

Mr. Francis Bradley: I think the answer is yes to both. Both are issues. Certainly, the way the 2019 act is being interpreted is resulting in significantly more challenging FAAs. I think we need to address both the interpretation of the act and the resourcing. It isn't one or the other; it's actually both of those that need to be taken into consideration.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weiler.

We'll now go to Madame Desbiens for six minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here. I have so many questions for them.

Mr. Kennedy, how is aquaculture a threat to marine protected areas?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Sorry, I didn't get the interpretation.

[*English*]

It's on channel one. I have it. Okay, we'll try again.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: You're resetting the clock for my time, aren't you, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: How could aquaculture damage marine protected areas?

From what I've heard, the aquaculture techniques you use are excellent. Then how could aquaculture be a problem in marine protected areas, at least on the east coast?

[*English*]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: There could be opportunities around certain technologies to limit, obviously, any impacts in the zone of a national marine conservation area. For instance, something that has been discussed, maybe even around this table, and that is certainly not commercially really proven out yet is closed containment in the marine environment, or closed pods in the marine environment. At this point in time, there have been no discussions with Parks Canada on whether those sorts of opportunities are viable in national marine conservation areas. I think those discussions have to take place. The reality is that those technologies still have to be tested out. We have to see whether they work.

In British Columbia, for instance, there is a ban on net pens. I think you're quite familiar with that. We are not in a position yet to know whether a lot of those new technologies, those closed containment technologies, can work out long-term. That will take time, so 2029 is absolutely impossible. You can't replace the salmon farming in British Columbia at this point in time with those new technologies.

This is something that I think is a discussion: Are there certain viable technologies in those areas? We're still not sure.

● (1750)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: We heard you say earlier that the legislative process was long and arduous and that, in the absence of a federal act dealing specifically with aquaculture, the committee could discuss incorporating an aquaculture component into the Fisheries Act as part of its current study. The act could include sections you feel are important.

You mentioned five priorities. Could they be part of our study and be incorporated into the Fisheries Act?

[*English*]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Yes, very much; these five recommendations are very specific to the Fisheries Act. Some small changes or recommendations around the inclusion of aquaculture in the Fisheries Act would be an important way to point to the future importance of the sector. We're very supportive of small, specific changes that could really help the sector.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: This year in Quebec there was a precipitous drop in salmon stocks. Salmon spawning has declined significantly. Right now, people in my area are almost in a panic.

Can aquaculture have a scientific component that could be used to restore the wild species, or do you just focus on fish farming?

[English]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: That's a great question. We have a number of projects across the country. The aquaculture companies, which really are the leading experts on the survival, breeding and propagation of salmon, have very successful projects. In the Bay of Fundy, for instance, Cooke Aquaculture, one of our large producers, is very active with Parks Canada in recovery efforts for salmon in that area. It's the most successful project around the re-establishment of salmon in Canada.

There is a lot more we could be doing to work with the conservation community. Unfortunately, to date, there has been a lot of polarization. Efforts to bring us all together are very, very important. I think we can do a lot more.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: It could be an advantage for the perception of aquaculture.

Thank you.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Collins for six minutes or less, please.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today.

First, I'll go to Mr. Kennedy.

I think we may have a different position on open-net farms. B.C. is the last place on the west coast of North America that has open-net Atlantic salmon farms. There have been dozens of studies showing the harms to wild Pacific salmon. A majority of British Columbians and over 120 first nations across B.C. support a transition away from open net-pen salmon farms.

However, I think we probably can agree that, in any transition, workers need to be supported, and there needs to be a comprehensive transition plan, a jobs plan. The government recently tabled the draft transition plan for moving away from open-net fish aquaculture in B.C. The draft plan was released seven weeks after their self-imposed deadline, and there was hardly any clear information on what the plan would actually look like.

Can you talk a little bit about what that actually means? What are the impacts of the lack of certainty on your transition planning? What are the impacts on communities? What happens when this uncertainty persists?

• (1755)

Mr. Tim Kennedy: You're right. We certainly disagree on a number of the foundational issues that you raised.

I think one thing that we can agree on is that we actually do embrace transition. We recognize that there are a lot of very deep public perceptions about the sector and that change needs to happen.

I will say that change has happened. Occasionally, we will be struck by how a lot of the criticism that we hear is actually criticism of a salmon-farming industry that no longer exists. It's criticism from the early 2000s about operations and activities that actually have been curtailed or changed over many years.

With respect, Ms. Collins, the other thing I do want to ask is about what jobs you are talking about. You've lived in Port Hardy. These are areas that have almost no other job opportunities in them. We're talking about very good, well-paid, middle-class jobs in British Columbia, in small communities, in first nations communities all across Vancouver Island.

When the NDP, for instance, talks about job transition, what is it to? There are very few other jobs. Are you talking about call centres? We're talking about biologists, scientists and engineers who are highly trained. We have the youngest agri-food workforce in Canada. Two-thirds of the workforce in British Columbia in our salmon-farming sector is under the age of 35. These are extremely well-trained people.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I have limited time, and we're about halfway through—

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I just want to say that, really, this is a real problem.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I'll just circle back to what the question was. This transition is happening. The government has released a draft plan. I think we probably agree that this has been inadequate to support communities and that, right now, people are looking out and not feeling a lot of hope.

I'm curious. When we talk about transitioning people—and you said yourself that you're on board for a transition—what does that look like to you? What can you see that the government could be doing better to support these workers in that transition? There are opportunities in clean energy, in marine conservation, and in many, many sectors that we could be supporting people to transition into. However, so far, what we've seen from this government is top-down decision-making without a lot of real support for the people on the ground.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Yes, I think you're right about the lack of hope. There's actually a fair bit of despair that's been created by this approach and this decision.

To be clear, transition is one thing, and there was an original commitment to transition away from ocean net-pens. That's something that we can actually embrace. What we can't embrace is an outright ban on ocean pens, because that's just not happening. It's not possible. People will lose their jobs. We have 5,000 people still employed directly and indirectly by the sector. They don't have anywhere to go right now.

To answer your question, there have been no approaches around other job training. There is a process going on at the moment to discuss some of these things, but it's totally inadequate, and it's very rushed. People are in a really difficult position.

Again, Ms. Collins, I'll just say that the NDP has been a real driver of this extreme decision, so I think a lot of that lack of hope and a lot of that despair needs to fall with you and your party.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I am really proud of the work that my colleagues have done in trying to protect wild salmon. As I mentioned, over 120 first nations communities across British Columbia and the majority of British Columbians want to see a transition away from open-net salmon farming, Atlantic salmon farming. It is having a devastating impact on our Pacific wild salmon stock, which has cultural significance to first nations communities. Seeing the decimation of that species is really concerning to most British Columbians.

I have more questions for Mr. Bradley, but I'll follow up in the next round.

• (1800)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Collins. Your time is up.

We go to Mr. Arnold for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses here today.

I want to start off with Mr. Bradley, if I could.

On December 7, 2016, Dr. David Schindler appeared before this committee—some of us were here at that time, and I was one of them—for a study of the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act. Dr. Schindler told the committee at the time that the Trudeau government-proposed climate change action plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 contained four scenarios, three of which proposed replacing fossil fuel power with so much hydroelectric power that we'd need 100 facilities the size of Muskrat Falls in Labrador or Site C in B.C. We'd have to build that many more between 2016 and 2050.

Can you tell me how much new hydroelectric power generation has been created since that statement in 2016, eight years ago?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Since 2016, we've had an addition of about 3,500 megawatts onto the system, but recognize that these are very long-term assets, and so decisions to bring those 3,500 megawatts online were made decades ago.

Mr. Mel Arnold: What percentage of the total production is that increase, roughly?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Off the top of my head, it's in the single digits.

Mr. Mel Arnold: It's a single-digit percentage increase in eight years, one-quarter of the time that we have to reach 2050. It doesn't sound like this government's targets for new hydro power are progressing in time for 2050, even though the climate action plan is based on significant expansion of hydroelectric generation.

Have the 2019 changes to the Fisheries Act facilitated or slowed development of new hydroelectric projects?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Well, it gives me no pleasure to come back to this committee six years later to say, "I told you so", but six years ago we expressed concern, based on how the legislation was drafted, that this would prove to be an impediment. It is proving to be an impediment, I would say, in terms of both the challenge of existing facilities and the ability to build new facilities. It's impacting both sides of that.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

Can you tell the committee how long it would take for a single project, like Muskrat Falls or Site C, to be completed if it was initiated today?

Mr. Francis Bradley: If a project was initiated today, we don't know how much time it would take to be built. The most recent experiences of our projects were prior to a number of changes—some of them to this act, but also changes to the Impact Assessment Act and other pieces of legislation. When you begin putting all of those together, it would be, frankly, at this stage almost impossible to predict how long it would take to get a project through the current processes, which are more complex than they were previously.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Are there any significant hydroelectric projects even being considered?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Yes, but they're certainly a little further down the track at this stage. In terms of how long it takes a project from start to finish, one of the more recent examples of this would be the Romaine project in Quebec, which was initiated in 2009 and completed in 2023. That was 14 years from beginning to end, on a 1,500-megawatt project based upon the previous regimes that we had with respect to the Fisheries Act, the Species at Risk Act and the Impact Assessment Act. It would be significantly more under the current regimes.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Would it be correct to characterize the Fisheries Act revisions as actually causing a lag in hydroelectric development?

• (1805)

Mr. Francis Bradley: Yes, that is our opinion. It is causing a lag in potential developments. It's also causing additional costs for authorizations of current projects. Not only is it hindering our future, but it's also adding additional costs to our present.

Frankly, it is going to make it more difficult for Canada to be able to meet its obligations and commitments with respect to greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The ability to build these types of clean projects will depend upon having a pathway forward for current projects and new projects. We don't have that pathway right now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arnold. You went a little bit over, but that's fine.

Mr. Hardie, go ahead for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're going to have to scoot through a couple of questions here.

Going back to 2012 and the Cohen report, recommendation 2 says, "In relation to wild fisheries, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans should act in accordance with its paramount regulatory objective to conserve wild fish." Following on that, of course, we have recommendation 3, which says, "The Government of Canada should remove from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' mandate the promotion of salmon farming as an industry and farmed salmon as a product."

First of all, do you agree with that second recommendation, that DFO should get out of the business of being mandated to look after your industry?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Yes.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Where should it go?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: As I said in my earlier comments, Mr. Hardie, we propose Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, or AAFC.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Good.

Now, the other issue has to do with DFO science. We've certainly had some interesting testimony on the quality and credibility of DFO science. It's been particularly, I would say, harmful to the interests of the aquaculture industry in British Columbia.

What would you propose to do with science at the DFO?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Mr. Hardie, would you mind if I pass this to Mia Parker, who hasn't spoken yet?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Sure.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: She's a great expert on these things, and I'd love to have her speak. Mia works with Mowi Canada West. She's on our executive committee.

Mia, go ahead, please.

Ms. Mia Parker (Executive Board Member, Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance): Thank you very much for the question.

It's a really interesting paradigm when you talk about what we would do with DFO science. I would say that what we really need to do with DFO science is recruit more scientists.

We have an avalanche, a waterfall, of really high-quality scientists retiring and very few new scientists being recruited to take their place. We're about to have a massive gap in our body of knowledge when it comes not just to aquaculture, but to fisheries management in general, because good management should be evidence-based and it should actually be based on sound science.

We've been speaking about a transition here today and the interactions between wild and farmed fish, but you need to know the stock status and the best ways to conserve wild fish if you're going to manage interactions.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'll have to interrupt you there because my time is short.

It occurs to me that what we've heard in testimony about DFO science is that—and this is my opinion—it's badly compromised because you get industry funding the science, and it has vetting authority over the results of the science, which really doesn't pass the sniff test with a lot of people. I don't think DFO science, as it's done, has done you any favours in your industry.

I'll go to Mr. Bradley.

I need to give you all of the time I have remaining to explain how you differentiate fisheries from a fish. You can't protect a fishery if you don't protect the fish. Can you just explain the difference that you see there, please?

Mr. Francis Bradley: Certainly. Thank you very much.

The distinction is an important one, because right now, with the focus on individual fish as opposed to supporting the fishery, we find ourselves in a very different situation than we were in previously.

When there is what we refer to as an incidental take—when fish are killed—it is a bad day for my member companies. They have always sought to make sure they operate in a manner that limits that, but they also take action to mitigate those sorts of things by building facilities that now have fish passages, for example. There are a number of examples of that. We have fish hatchery programs. We have habitat enhancement that takes place. In all those cases, the mitigation measures are more than making up for the incidental take—the fish that are killed as a result of our operations.

That doesn't work under the current regime. Under the current regime, we're supposed to be protecting the individual fish as opposed to the overall fishery. For a number of our facilities, we're unable to get those FAAs because fish are being killed, even though the mitigation measures more than make up for that, and that is a problem.

● (1810)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

We'll now go to Madame Desbiens for two and a half minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is all very interesting. It's crazy, I'd like to keep you here for another hour.

Still, I'm going to go back to Mr. Kennedy or Ms. Parker.

Aquaculture straddles two areas, agriculture and fisheries. How can we draft satisfactory legislation, avoid mistakes, improve scientific research and strengthen aquaculture, which, realistically, is becoming a necessity? How can we put in place solid legislation on both fronts that could benefit the development of your industry? It has to address both agriculture and fisheries, because both are involved. What are you proposing?

[English]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I will speak first, and then I'll turn to Mia.

I would say our vision is that the science would remain with DFO. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans would have the science capacity.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Just so you know, we have a minute and a half left.

[English]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I'll turn it over to Mia to talk about how to improve.

Ms. Mia Parker: What we'd like to see with that champion role of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is to have the development science—the research into robust fish, the interaction and the management science in terms of the relationship between aquaculture and wild fisheries—with DFO, because they're to manage both groups.

The actual.... How to promote and develop aquaculture and the way you would develop other herd animals, I think, should be with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Do you want to take the few seconds I have left to add something, Mr. Kennedy?

[English]

Mr. Tim Kennedy: The only thing I'd add is that Mr. Hardie mentioned the DFO process. We have said again and again that if there is a problem with the regulatory system under which we are regulated, it's your responsibility and the minister's responsibility to fix it.

Has it been substantially fixed? The supposed problems have been pointed out for many years, but we actually haven't seen substantial fixes to address those things.

Mr. Hardie, those are the responsibilities of your government. We can't do anything as industry. We are simply under those laws. We'd love to have more objective science, but I think it's up to you to make those changes.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Ms. Collins for two and a half minutes or less.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Following up on that, it was just in May that the Integrity Commissioner launched an investigation into DFO officials over allegations of attempts to silence scientists on the dangers of open-net fish farms. That was in response to Wild Salmon Forever, a B.C.-based conservation group. Ms. Solloway looked at that and found that it was warranted to launch an investi-

gation into officials trying to dissuade scientists from communicating with media and being public about their research.

I expect it from Conservative governments—the Harper government had a long history of silencing scientists—but it is incredibly disappointing that this is happening under consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments.

Do I have about 30 seconds or a minute left?

• (1815)

The Chair: You have one and a half minutes.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Okay, great. Maybe I'll quickly ask about the Bay of Fundy.

I met with FORCE, which is doing a study on tidal energy in the Bay of Fundy, and with other folks in that region. They had some concerns about how DFO was applying legislation and policy in different regions and about how that could hinder the development of some clean energy projects we have in Canada.

Do you know anything about some of the concerns they had there? Can you speak a bit about that recommendation to make sure that we have consistency across regions?

Mr. Francis Bradley: I don't have anything specific to that project. As I said earlier, it isn't just hydroelectric dams that are potentially impacted by the Fisheries Act. It could impact these sorts of facilities as well.

However, you raise an important question, and that is around inconsistent approaches to how this legislation is implemented. In addition to the concerns that we have, overall, in terms of the lack of guidance and the lack of ability to have a pathway forward, we also see—and have seen for quite some time, even under the previous Fisheries Act—that there has always been an inconsistent approach to how this act is administered across the country. There is no consistency from region to region.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We'll go to Mr. Bragdon for five minutes or less, please.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): I'll yield the first couple of questions to Mr. Small, and then I'll take it from there.

The Chair: You only get five minutes. You might not get to speak at all.

Go ahead, Mr. Small.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll go back to Mr. Kennedy or to Ms. Parker.

Philanthropists who have practised scorched earth all their lives are trying to buy their penance, I guess, by supporting ENGOS. In terms of our seal harvest in Newfoundland and Labrador, they still say that we're harvesting whitecoats, which hasn't happened since 1983.

You mentioned that there's a portrayal of your industry that's no longer accurate. Can you speak to that?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Sure. We have done research, and I think the story needs to be told more broadly. We know that tens of millions of dollars have been brought into Canada from U.S. foundations in the early 2000s and have been also mixed in with Alaskan salmon interests to demarket farm salmon. This happened in the early 2000s. Since then, opposition to the sector has been picked up, but all of that seed funding has resulted in what I think Ms. Collins was talking about, which is this broader antagonism towards the sector based on practices that....

The sector is 50 years old in British Columbia. It's not very old. It's about 45 years old. That's only a few generations of production. When we started the production in British Columbia, was it perfect? Absolutely not. Has it been massively improved? Yes, it has. What we find in social media, for instance, in the criticisms, is that they always recycle. It's very hard to stop these things and to correct these things. It's reached a point, obviously, where the Liberal government believed this opposition was so strong that it needed to shut things down.

That is really not what public polling says. Public polling says there are concerns, which we recognize. We can make changes to our industry, quite dramatic changes, with existing technology. You do not need to shut down net pens. That is so extreme. This is what I think all of this opposition has been pointing to.

Can you imagine? Again, on the science perspective, we go from CSAS reports saying that we pose no more than "minimal risk" to wild salmon to suddenly saying that we have to shut down, that it's 100% risk and it has to go away. That's exactly what this decision is, banning open-net salmon farms. It seems like there is almost a shadow government of environmentalists that is trying to control the minister to shut us down, which is, again, so extreme. I'm sorry, but I will say that the NDP has been a big part of that.

• (1820)

Mr. Clifford Small: You mentioned the Alaskan wild fishery. In 1990, before fish farming really took off worldwide, what do you think Alaskans were receiving for sockeye salmon at the wharf?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Did you say back in the 1990s?

Mr. Clifford Small: Yes.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I don't know. I'm sorry.

Mr. Clifford Small: It was \$6 a pound.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Okay.

Mr. Clifford Small: What do you think they got last year?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I believe it was under a buck.

Mr. Clifford Small: It was 70¢ a pound last year. That's quite the drop. Six dollars a pound in 1990 would be \$12 a pound right now, with 2% inflation.

Do you think that was U.S. money? I've heard figures as high as \$200 million. Those came in via the NGOs and philanthropists. Do you think that was on purpose, in order to disadvantage your industry in the marketplace, in favour of the American wild fishery?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: We certainly have evidence of that. We know there were demarketing campaigns in the early 2000s that were targeted at B.C. salmon farms as a competitive industry.

There's no question there was a lot of money that flowed into Canada for those purposes.

We'd agree with that.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Bragdon, do you have a question?

The Chair: You have 25 seconds. You can do what you like with it.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: I'm down to 15 or 10 seconds.

Thanks to each of you for your insightful testimony.

Mr. Kennedy, let's wrap up. I know how important the aquaculture industry is to many of our coastal communities on the east coast and in the Atlantic provinces. Would you be able to briefly share with us how many jobs and coastal communities—in terms of their vitality and future vitality—are somewhat interconnected with the aquaculture industry?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I'll use one very quick example. Mayor Steve Crewe from Hermitage, Newfoundland, said something like this: "What would our community be without aquaculture? It would be a cemetery." We're seeing communities that declined over years and years coming back and having new vitality. Families are coming back. This applies to the west coast, as well, and many first nations communities where salmon farming has been, in particular, a huge driver of family and community renewal.

That's the future of seafood production in Canada. I think it's critical for this committee to embrace that.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Morrissey to finish up in five minutes or less.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you, Chair.

The committee is reviewing the Fisheries Act. We've been hearing a lot about economics and finger pointing. I'd like to come back to the act.

Mr. Kennedy, you referenced that change needs to happen, and that operations have changed. What would your key recommendation be for a change in the Fisheries Act that supports your industry while protecting the environment and those coastal communities at the same time?

Mr. Tim Kennedy: I would say that the most important change for us in the Fisheries Act is mentioning the word "aquaculture" and having a definition of aquaculture that coexists with international definitions at the United Nations food agency. There are definitions. Recognizing us as a food-producing sector is very important.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Could you supply to the committee some of those international definitions you may have access to? I would like to see them go in.

Mr. Tim Kennedy: Sure.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Chair, I'm going to turn my time over to Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you.

I want to pick up on something you mentioned before, Mr. Kennedy. You mentioned that the industry is capable of making some very dramatic changes to reduce the environmental impact of the sector.

I'm curious. Why have we not seen large-scale investments in things like closed containment—whether that's on land or in water—or semi-closed containment and some of the other technologies that can reduce farmed and wild salmon interaction?

• (1825)

Mr. Tim Kennedy: That's a great question.

Mia, go ahead.

Ms. Mia Parker: Thank you very much for that question.

I think it's very important that everybody understand the reason. You haven't seen that investment because of the transition process. The transition process chilled institutional investment in aquaculture in Canada. We have not had a dime of money in four years. We are four years behind every other salmon-producing region in the world because of the transition process. We are at high risk of being gone. That means the eggs, the brood stock, the support we give for salmon enhancement, the processing plants and the wharves we maintain so commercial and sport fishermen can land their catch. That means the roads we maintain. That means the grain we buy from Canadian farmers for feed. That means the feed mills. If we go, the feed mills will go. They don't just produce salmon feed.

Why haven't we done it? It's because we can't afford it. We can't afford it because there is no business certainty.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thanks, Ms. Parker.

I want to go back to you, Mr. Bradley. You mentioned a number of things with the FAAs. One is that they're overwhelmed. You mentioned changes but also interpretation. What specific interpretation with FAAs do you see slowing down some of those processes?

Mr. Francis Bradley: What we would like to see in that space, and what would assist things, would be to put in place developments of alternative compliance mechanisms for low-risk, routine activities that would be relatively simple. We need to actually identify what those clear pathways to compliance are for existing facilities.

We should be looking at alternative compliance mechanisms, things like codes of practices and the codes that are actually useful for industry. We need the department to look at and acknowledge existing best management practices. We could look at greater use of provincial regulatory processes instead of seeing duplications. Right now, in the absence of this, a number of our members have facilities that are not in compliance. They do not have FAAs.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: I come from an environmental law background, so hearing some of this worries me a little bit, when you're moving into more professional reliance. In those cases, one, you might not have that watchful eye to ensure that things are actually being met, and two, oftentimes you're relying on a professional who has a bias, because they're hired by the industry.

How can you move in that direction, then, while still being able to ensure that you'll have the environmental protection that is meant to be the purpose of this act?

Mr. Francis Bradley: I think this goes back to my initial point, which was about the change in 2019 from the goal of protecting fisheries to protecting individual fish. I think the intention should go back to precisely that. From a legal standpoint, I think that would be the simplest step, at this stage. We've provided that as a recommendation in terms of the amendments. This would be really the starting point for this. It would remove the ambiguity we have today.

As I said earlier, we believe this will be absolutely essential if we're going to be able to continue to grow the clean electricity system and get good, clean electricity projects built. This legislation, other pieces of legislation, other regulations—I always see them on a bit of a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum, it's a barrier. On the other end of the spectrum, it's an enabler. If you're lucky, it's somewhere in the middle. Right now, the Fisheries Act is definitely on the side of that spectrum where it is a barrier. It could be an enabler, but it is not. We need to address this.

As I said, I hate coming back six years later and saying that we could have addressed this when we did the legislative change in 2019. I think we need to do it now.

• (1830)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Parker and Mr. Bradley, I want to thank you for sharing your knowledge with the committee members today. Hopefully, it will show up in the report that will be done at the end of the day on this particular study. Thank you for coming. We appreciate your being here.

On Monday, we will resume our study of the Fisheries Act. We'll have officials from DFO and Environment and Climate Change Canada for the first hour, and stakeholders for the second hour.

On the minister's appearance, the minister is available on December 4 for an hour, and officials for two hours, on the supplementary estimates (B).

The meeting is adjourned. Enjoy your evening.

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