



June 10, 2020

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER SOUTH

Oral Question 112-19(2) - NWT Commercial Fishing Industry

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 28, 2020 regarding the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's (ITI) rationale in encouraging the migration of new commercial fishers into the Northwest Territories (NWT) and I committed to looking into the issue.

The Strategy for Revitalizing the Great Slave Lake Commercial Fishery identifies relocation of new fishers to Great Slave Lake as a study area. ITI has been working with the NWT Fisherman's Federation (NWTFF) to maintain a specific catch volume, which is required to make the proposed Hay River fish plant economically viable. Existing fishers are getting older, with a median age in the mid 60's. ITI is working with NWTFF and the Marine Training Institute to try to attract NWT residents to participate in the fishery and have sponsored and assisted in the delivery of courses aimed at encouraging younger entrants.

This has met with limited success. Several years ago, the NWTFF supported a motion at a Great Slave Lake Advisory Board meeting to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to allow up to five non-resident fishers to be allowed to fish on Great Slave Lake. There is currently one non-resident fisher active in the sector. Without replacing the existing fishers and their volumes as they age out and retire, there is a real concern that there will be insufficient volumes to support either a domestic commercial or export fishery, including jeopardizing the viability of the Hay River fish plant.

Thank you.

Katrina Nokleby, P.Eng.
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator
Executive and Indigenous Affairs