



Election 2021 Brief

Attention: Fisheries for Communities Network
Action Needed

A federal election has been called, to be held Sept. 20, 2021.

Fisheries in BC are a federal-level issue because fisheries policies fall under federal jurisdiction and because Pacific fisheries contribute to Canadian food security, GDP, social and cultural well-being, and coastal economies. DFO fisheries policy does not treat the East and West Coast equally. East Coast policy prioritizes harvester and community well-being and requires licences be owned by active harvesters or First Nations. The West Coast allows licences and quota to be sold to anyone, including big corporations and foreign investors; this increasingly draws the benefits of the fishery away from West Coast communities. We believe that is unfair, unsustainable, and harmful to coastal communities and Canada as a whole. When anyone, or any corporation, can buy, sell, and rent out the privilege to harvest our marine resources, it undermines fish harvesters, First Nations, local communities, and the local value of our rich Pacific fisheries.

So, we're calling on the Fisheries for Communities Network.

If this network mobilizes and reaches out to MP candidates in a variety of key constituencies, then we can elevate the awareness of fisheries licence ownership issues in BC. By attending all-candidate events and contacting candidates' offices to express the breadth and depth of impact these policies have, we can create a collective difference. When active harvesters and First Nations must compete with corporate consolidation and foreign and speculative investors for fisheries licence and quota, it is much harder to afford to fish, and the many community benefits from the fishery are lost. If we can communicate what benefits can be reclaimed when fisheries licences and quota are held by bona fide harvesters and First Nations - then we hope our newly elected officials will push for change.

How you can help:

- 1) Contact the candidates in your riding!**
 - a) Attend a virtual town hall or an all-candidates meeting.
 - b) Call your candidates' offices to express your concern.

- c) Email/write a personal letter to your candidates
Speaking points, questions, and candidate contact information below
- 2) **Click the “Write Your Candidates”** link in the top right corner of the Fisheries for Communities webpage to send a pre-drafted letter to candidates in your riding. You can even personalize your letter before sending! www.fisheriesforcommunities.org
if you see “email the government” instead, try clearing your web browser cache.
- 3) **Share on social media** and use the hashtags: **#keepfishlocal** and tag @fisheriesforcommunities via Instagram or @fish4community on Twitter.
 - a) Share the [Keep Fish Local video](#) from Fisheries for Communities Instagram or Facebook page.
 - b) Share images and text about the importance of keeping fishing licence and quota access local.
 - c) Share images and text about the importance of BC fish and fisheries to your family, friends, and community.
 - d) You can also use these hashtags: #CdnPoli #2021Election #yourcoastyourfish #coastalfisherycoastalbenefit
- 4) **Vote!**
If you are unsure about your availability on Sept. 20, there are alternative options. Check them out here: <https://www.elections.ca/>

Sample Speaking Points:

Issue: On average, 407 million lbs and \$430 million of seafood is harvested from the BC coast every year, yet local seafood is increasingly hard to access and the local benefits for fish harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities are being drained away.

Why is this happening: How is this possible? Decades ago, fisheries policy changed on the West Coast. DFO privatized fishing access rights, making fishing licences and quota available on the open market to the highest bidder. This has made it harder for BC fish harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities to compete with corporate and foreign interests in the fishery. As a result, coastal community fishing and processing jobs have continuously declined, along with local input to management, compromising coastal communities' long-standing connections to the sea. As outside investors and global corporations reap more financial benefit from our fisheries, coastal communities are increasingly losing the social, cultural, and economic benefits that they once gained from their adjacent fisheries.

The alternative: Local food systems, harvester livelihoods, and sustainable coastal economies must be prioritized over profits for big business and speculative investors. On Canada's East Coast, fisheries law already requires that benefits from fisheries stay local. We need equivalent policy on the Pacific Coast that gives fishing access back to bona fide fish harvesters and First Nations. It's simple. Only First Nations and people who work on fishing boats should be able to own licence and quota. The new government must create policy that ends foreign, large corporate, and investor ownership of fishing licences and quota.

The opportunity for change is now, members of Parliament have the responsibility to speak on behalf of their constituents and have the opportunity to make real change on issues that impact their well-being. **MPs need to hold the federal government accountable and ensure this issue is addressed in the new mandate letter for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.**

Questions you could ask your candidates:

- How are you going to ensure commercial fisheries are contributing to coastal and rural economies and food systems as we 'build back better' from COVID-19?
- How will you ensure Canadian fish can contribute to local food systems? How can you help local markets better support and address the needs of commercial fish harvesters?
- Do you think it's okay that Federal fisheries policy prioritizes the economy and well-being of East Coast commercial fish harvesters and coastal communities, but not Pacific commercial fish harvesters and coastal communities?
- Do you support the end to foreign ownership of BC commercial fisheries licence and quota?
- Do you support the end to corporate consolidation and speculative investment in BC fisheries?
- Will you commit to working with your government to increase the benefits derived from BC fisheries for working harvesters, First Nations, and coastal communities?

Contacts for support:

If you want to talk through the issue, or need any clarification or support, please do not hesitate to contact one of our FFC resident West Coast Canadian fisheries policy experts:

Tasha Sutcliffe – contact by text message for availability: 778-788-3466

Jim McIsaac – email at: JAMcIsaac@shaw.ca

Racheal Weymer – text or call: 604-562-7159