



Election 2021

Brief:

# KEEP THE BENEFITS OF OUR FISHERIES LOCAL



# Take Big Business and Speculative Investment Out of Our Fisheries: Keep the Benefit of Fisheries Local



fisheriesforcommunities.org

## Who we are

We are a network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters, small businesses, community organizations, chefs, fishing families, First Nations and leaders in coastal communities who are all deeply concerned about the future of fisheries-dependent communities on the West Coast of Canada.

## The problem

Like you, we love local, wild, sustainable seafood, and want to see a fishery that supports fish harvesters, First Nations, and sustainable coastal economies. 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 and their communities are disappearing. 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. Meanwhile, on Canada's East Coast, fisheries law already requires that benefits from fisheries stay local. Why is this not also a priority on the West Coast?

## The solution

Give 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. Local food systems, harvester livelihoods, and sustainable coastal economies must be prioritized over profits for big business and speculative investors.

## What we need

We need a commitment from the new government — including direction to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the new mandate letter — to create policy that ensures the benefits of West Coast fisheries stay local and support the well-being of fish harvesters, First Nations and coastal communities.

## Contact

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