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Five Fishy Questions for NL Provincial Parties & Candidates

Towards a sustainable future for fisheries, coastal communities and the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador

Provincial Parties and Candidates of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) are being asked ‘five fishy questions’ on the future of fisheries and coastal communities in the province. As a major source of employment, and a crucial component of the economy, NL fisheries have undergone significant social, ecological, economic, and institutional changes up until and since the moratoria on multiple Atlantic Canadian fisheries, including for Northern cod. Now in yet another period of transformation, NL fisheries are marked by declining crab and shrimp quotas, an aging workforce, concerns about labour shortages, and conflict around resource access, governance and stock assessment science. As climate change proceeds, the resource, regulatory, market and fiscal landscapes are also being transformed. There is a pressing need to respond to these changes if we are to achieve a sustainable future for fisheries, coastal communities and the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Together, Fishing for Success, Too Big To Ignore and Ocean Frontier Institute’s Module I ‘Informing Governance Responses in a Changing Ocean’ aim to initiate and give momentum to a public discussion on the challenges and opportunities for NL fisheries as an integral part of the province’s economy and heritage. We envision thriving coastal communities, with employment opportunities in the fishing industry as well as improved access to resources and markets ensuring the use of sustainable practices and food security to all. The initiative is also a call to action to all stakeholders and an invitation to our provincial policy makers to embrace our fisheries and work together to find ways to reconnect us to our past, revitalize our present and build our future for the generations to come.

We look forward to receiving the parties’ response to these questions by Friday May 10, then sharing them with you!

Here are the five fishy questions that we should all be concerned about:

- 1. EMPLOYMENT:** Almost a third (32%) of Newfoundland and Labrador professional fish harvesters are above 54 years of age. Workplace policies and safety regulations restrict youth from participating in most areas of a commercial fishery until the age of 16, yet career choice is greatly influenced before the age of 9 and there is little attention to fish harvesting, or related careers, in school programming. Further, as a result of real barriers to the participation of women in maritime industries, including fishing, only about 23% of the professional fish harvesters are women.

 - What specific policies would your party put forward to increase recruitment of young people, including women, into the fishing industry, as well as to facilitate training and longer-term retention?
- 2. FOOD SECURITY:** The province has set a target of doubling our food security by 2022. New policies are needed to encourage engagement in fishing and local sales of fish as a component of food security.

 - What mechanisms and infrastructure will your party target to create a fisheries value chain that makes local fish more accessible and affordable for Newfoundlanders & Labradorians?
- 3. COMMUNITIES:** Within our coastal communities, fishing still provides the best tool for sustainable development because it is cross-linked with culture, tourism, technology, and transportation.

 - What is your party's plan for promoting our fishing industry within the provincial economy and how will you ensure that policies supporting fisheries are more fully integrated across different departments of government?
- 4. ACCESS:** Securing access to resources and markets for small-scale fishers has been recognized by both [the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](#), as a means to viable fishing livelihoods.

 - What specific actions will your party take to improve access to resources and markets, both local and external, for small scale fisheries?
- 5. SUSTAINABILITY:** The scientific community has provided information and tools that can be used to ensure harvesting, processing, and the distribution of fish products are done in a more ecologically and economically sustainable way, helping us meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

 - What policies, technologies and infrastructure will your party target for change in order to reduce habitat destruction, bycatch, carbon footprint, and fish waste, among others?

About us:

Fishing For Success is a nonprofit social enterprise with the vision, “One day every child in Newfoundland and Labrador will once again be taught the traditional fishing knowledge and skill of their ancestors; that this will instill in them a sense of pride, of place, and a longing to protect and conserve their natural home.” Fishing for Success believes that there is inherent value in fishing, beyond the economic activity, that has the power to reconnect us all to nature, ancestor and community – and even inspire us to greater things! Fishing For Success provides authentic fishing experiences for tourists using this revenue to fund community programs like Youth Cod Fishery, Girls Who Fish, and WiSH for newcomers. We believe that fishing is a shared human heritage that has encouraged innovation and creativity since the beginning of time, inspiring artists and musicians, and prompting us to build even bigger boats and more accurate navigational equipment. And it is about access to healthy, local food.

For more info: <https://www.islandrooms.org/home.html>

Too Big To Ignore is a global research network and knowledge mobilization partnership that focuses on addressing issues and concerns affecting viability and sustainability of small-scale fisheries. The overall aims of TBTI are to raise the profile of small-scale fisheries and reduce their marginalization, promote their wellbeing, and improve governance. TBTI argues for a more inclusive and holistic approach to sustainable development by incorporating issues and concerns facing small-scale fisheries, as expressed by small-scale fisheries communities, more centrally in the discussion about the future and ways forward. Ultimately, TBTI aims to inform and influence fisheries policies and development agenda at the national, regional and international levels.

For more info: <http://toobigtoignore.net/>

The Ocean Frontier Institute’s Module I ‘Informing Governance Responses in a Changing Ocean’ is an interdisciplinary component of a larger collaborative research initiative between Dalhousie University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the University of Prince Edward Island, working in partnership with federal and provincial government agencies, private sectors and international partners. Established in 2016 through funding support from the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, OFI brings together researchers and institutes from both sides of the North Atlantic to understand our changing ocean and create safe and sustainable solutions for development. More specifically, research Module I of OFI examines the consequences of social, ecological and institutional changes for the future of fisheries, coastal communities and the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. It also explores alternative options for governments and other governing actors to respond to these changes in order to help achieve a sustainable future.

For more info: <https://oceanfrontierinstitute.com/research/informing-governance-responses-in-a-changing-ocean>

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