

Robert Ross
P.O. Box 2022
Hay River, N.W.T.
XOE QRO

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 22 - 90 (2) TABLED ON OCT 19 1990

May 8, 1990

Sam Gangan
MLA.

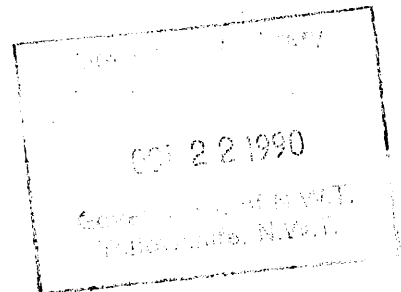
Dear Sir:

The figures shown are only figures of the fish and expenses, not to mention the wages and so on. Due to the amount of small fish and high cullage, our fish is only worth about 70 cents per pound, not 85 cents per pound. Thus the earnings for small fish caught is not the same as medium or large. Therefore I am sending you a copy of some D.C.R.s to see for yourselves.

I would also like to make mention that a lot of "fishermen", small fishermen have outstanding bank loans, for fishing equipment and how do we pay for our equipment if we cannot catch enough fish to pay for our gas and groceries. The end to our fishing days seems to be getting nearer every day.

Thank you for the considerations.

Robert Ross



STATEMENT OF INTENT

BY

Small Fishermens of Great Slave Lake

After careful consideration and deliberation, we, the small fishermens of Great Slave Lake, in the Northwest Territories, have informally come to agree that the time has come to act in an organized fashion and manner to secure those things we deem necessary for our survival as small fishermens.

We have tried over and over to gain some solution to our problems resulting from the way the fishermens are organized at the level of Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Our effort meant nothing and our protests were unheeded by those in power to control our livelihood. We think this unfair to the small fisherman because we, as small fishermens, are the operators least benefitting from the subsidies paid to the marketing corporation for the lake fishermens in the N.W.T.

Further, we believe the larger or big operators gain the larger benefit from the subsidy paid by volume of fish caught on annual basis since they could fish during both summer and winter seasons and that they are represented by the Fishermen's Federation which body influences harvesting regulations and controls. We, as small fishermens, have not or cannot gain the volume of fish poundage necessary to pay for the equipment to take advantage of far off Zones or Area to be competitive with "Big Fishermens."

We are reduced to fishing at the south end of the Great Slave lake or nearer to the F.F.M.C. packing plant with snowmobiles and small boats. Our mode of fishing is difficult in both, winter and summer season. This is not to say that it is easy for our competitor but there is a great difference. We, the small boat operators must take shelter from the winds that the larger boat does not. Likewise, the snowmobile user rarely fishes during stronger and colder winds while the Bombadier user finds shelter behind the machine to continue



lifting nets. To add insult to injury, the big outfits can go almost anywhere any time to areas open to commercial fishing but, they usually come to where the small outfit fishermens are and take the greater volume of fish of the area quota. This practise results in the small fisherman not being able to get the necessary poundage of fish to benefit from the Territorial subsidy. As small outfit fishermens, we have never protested this practise by our larger colleagues who are the actual beneficiaries of the subsidy paid by the Government of the Northwest Territories for northern freshwater fisherman. We feel very strongly that northern people should benefit from any subsidy given by the Territorial Government and not the other way around. We say this because most fishermens on the Great Slave Lake are brought into the north by the big outfits and the operators of these outfits themselves have come from elsewhere that not likely will they retire to the northern community. Thus we feel our representative bodies and government is failing to protect our interest to make a living in accordance with the standards everyone takes for granted. Instead we are finding ourselves begging for a livelihood which should be rightfully ours as northerners who came here to make a home to take new roots and as northerners who were born here and native. Further, we feel that one does not have to be a mathematical expert to realize he is being shortchanged all the way around when it comes to subsidy to the fisherman. We do know that the larger poundage receives the larger subsidy and the only way a fisherman can catch a large volume of fish is to have a large boat or boats, bombardier or two and hundreds of nets and a large crew. We have no objection to a fisherman becoming a big outfit providing this fisherman does not gain monopoly over the livelihood of lesser fishermens and

provides fair employment, better living income and training for northern fisherman. We understand this to be a must although it is with distaste we make the statement because we realize that when an outfit gets large, it also displaces a small fisherman because there are just so much fish out in the pond and there are limits to the amount of fish that can be taken safely without harming or reducing the stock.

The ability of big outfits to fish anywhere on the Great Slave Lake is also a factor in the volume of fish caught. They take a lot of fish from distant areas open to commercial fishing, while the small fisherman cannot safely or cheaply venture too far away from western Areas in either summer or winter fishing seasons, the big fisherman does come into these Areas to fish out the Area limit.

This leaves the small fisherman packing up fishing while the big outfit goes onto Areas open to commercial fishing further away from the packing plant harbour. We think that allowing this to continue is to exploit the small fisherman as the means to force him out of the fishing industry. Should our fears prove true, then irresponsibility with which our affairs has been cared for could and would have to lay with the Government of the Northwest Territories for failing to have safeguarded our welfare as fishermens of the N.W.T. by subsidizing outside interests instead of the small fisherman who needed help the most.

We do know beyond any doubt that we have no alternative but to fish within a short distant from the receiving packing plant. There are many reasons for this fact. Fact one is: the cost of equipment and fuel is high and we cannot catch the volume needed to benefit from the subsidy to the extent that we need help to reduce the drain on family income to keep on fishing. We think, it's our families who are helping us to fish for fershwater - it should be the other way

around. There are other factors too, why the small fishermens have to have a fair shake at gaining the N.W.T. subsidy directly to the small operator. One of these factor being that, the small fishermen with families and a small crew need it most to achieve a standard of living in line with the minimum income requirements. We have said these on numerous occasions but nothing has been done to our knowledge.

These and much more has lead us to believe that we are being exploited as cheap labour and being destroyed systematically by the Fishermen's Federation for the purposes of gaining favor with Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Of course, we wish not to believe this but why are we being kept in the dark about certain things within the fraternity of fishermens in the north?

Our fears are unconfirmed. However, we do know that we are being kept from discovering the truth about matters affecting our livelihood. If this is unfounded then why were we not told about the opportunity to fish at Simpson Island and the fifteen (15¢) cents per pound fish subsidy as was told to the Federation's people?

It is clear to us, the non federated small fishermens, that the big fishermens don't want us in on their chance to grab as much fish as they can.

This is nothing new. However it is disturbing to think that there are people who don't care if we starve or not. As implied previously, we do not receive the subsidy for our fish as small fishermens and it costs us a lot more per pound to haul our catch of fish to packing plant than the big fishermen because they can carry a volume of fish much greater than we can with the equipment they operate. The boats used are large enough to reduce their costs in terms of fuel used per pound of fish. Likewise, they use wide gage Bombadiers for winter fishing which can and does handle a ton of fish which, again, reduces the cost of transporting a pound

of fish to the packing plant at Hay River. But for us, the small fishermen, using small boats and snowmobiles, find ourselves faced with increasing fuel costs and other operating expenses cutting into our needed budget to run two homes - one which we must maintain in town to live and one where our small crew and ourselves must stay while fishing season is open in order to gain a living wage at the poverty level. This cannot continue, if we are to survive as northern ~~XXXXXX~~ small fishermen. The size of our outfits in comparison to the much larger outfits, clearly show that we, the small northern fishermen are the one's in need of the subsidy. Further, we are also the fishermen who hire and train northerners for the fishing industry to a much greater degree than big fishermen who use southern help. These men from the provinces usually remain just long enough to pay their own way back out to look for some other line of employment or work, thus the turn over of fishermen is having an undetermined effect on the subsidy given to F.F.M.C.

We feel this need not be if strings were attached to the use of the subsidy given and equally applied to FFMC and the Fishermen's Federation. As we previously stated, the real beneficiaries of fishermen's subsidy are southerners who come to fish in our lakes and who are in the employ of FFMC and/or its agencies all over the south, why can we, then, be given our fair share of the subsidy as small non federated fishermen of the Great Slave Lake?

Our view of fair share of the subsidy is half of the subsidy money will go to the federated fishermen and the other half to the non federated fishermen who are the small and upstart fishermen.

We believe that the small and upstart northern fisherman is deserving of the subsidy since he has no choice but to live here in the north and not likely will he retire to the south. Beyond this view is our vision of northern fisherman's making way for the little man trying to make a living from the abundance of renewable wildlife resources and fish is amongst these.

We, the small fishermens, have always encouraged others to get involved in the fishing industry. We do not object to another man trying to make a living by harvesting what he must from the renewable resources available to him.

What we object to is being cut off from harvesting what we think should be our rightful share, be it fish or the subsidy given in our best interest. There are a lot more small fishermens than there are big fishermens but never have we seen the small fishermens trying to make impossible the livelihood of the large operator. In fact, we see the big fisherman as an inspiration to the beginner, the trainee, the would be fisherman and the small outfit operator/owner. They do give us hope that one day, we too, will have an outfit like theirs!

But for obvious reasons, our hope is rapidly fading into disrespect for them because we feel we are being exploited in the manner which could only result in forcing us out of commercial fishing on the Great Slave Lake.

We are not saying all of our problems in harvesting fish is the fault of the big fishermens but it is true that they are the greater beneficiary of the subsidy paid by volumes of fish they catch because they are enabled to fish anywhere on the lake in any season while we, the small fishermens, are constrained to fish near and to southern waters of the lake within safe travel distances to harbours of Hay River vicinity.

Added to the problems of our inability to catch comparable volumes of fish to the big fishermens are the excessive interests charged against us for

administrative purposes. We think this to be unnecessary and view this practise by Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation as an deliberate attempt to discourage small fishermen, thereby forcing them out of the fishing industry by making and creating impossible conditions for the small fisherman to make any profit on year round basis where the kickback at the end of the fishing season would be greater or comparable to the big outfits or atleast, the small outfit could and would receive a fair share of the subsidy paid to FFMC.

We believe that we are not benefitting from the subsidy given to FFMC on our behalf. Because there are several categories of fish pricing. These range from size to seasons of legal commercial fishing on the Great Slave Lake in the N.W.T. We do not know at this time with any certainty who is responsible for this practise but we are quite certain that the Fishermens Federation, representing only the big outfits, do have input into the regulations governing the fishing on the lake since they are the advisory body to the authorities responsible for fish products.

We strongly feel that these responsible bodies charged with our welfare as small fishermen, have utterly failed to safeguard our trust and our right to a meaningful return on our labour.

We, therefore, ask that consideration be paid to us by giving us half of the N.W.T subsidy directly credited to the small fisherman of Great Slave Lake to help alleviate some of the high cost of operation due to high fuel prices and equipment maintainance. We admit, this alone will not resolve the many problems with which we are faced from day to day but it will help toward resolving some of the problem areas.

There are other matters which we believe is worth mentioning now. This matter is the use of the Purchase Order system of the FFMC. We think the use of the P.O. by small fishermen is harming their credibility at the community level while promoting the credibility of FFMC as a good corporate citizen. FFMC fully knows that the small upstart fisherman may not be able to pay his debt in full until such time he is able to bring in the necessary poundage of fish to pay expenses and debt. We ask you, what would happen in the event a big outfit cuts in and cleans out the Area quota?

Will the small fisherman be able to up-keep his good credit standing if he cannot catch the necessary poundage because a "big outfit" cleaned out the quota where he was? We think not. Atleast not until he moves his nets to another place where there are fish!

Due to these kinds of problems and other factors such as extreme weather, damages to equipment and breakdowns, it is difficult for the small outfit fisherman to fish without help to alleviate the high cost that burdens him most. Thus the need of gaining a fair share of the subsidy paid to FFMC on behalf of the fishermans of Great Slave Lake. Currently, we are the least beneficiaries of this subsidy paid on behalf of the fisherman!

We have attempted to draw attion to our most pressing problems areas over a long period of time but these were unheeded be cause we are the non federated small fishermen of the Great Slave Lake. We are also the fishermen who took new roots in the north. Some of us and our families are born here in the north while a few of us have come from elsewhere, we have spent our entire life fishing the Great Slave Lake. Some of our predecessors are buried here and we maintain the legacy they left us by fishing in the manner that they have. Some of them have used dog-teams in the winter and small skiffs or canoes in the summer.

Likewise, we, the non federated small fisherman use small crafts during the summer with outboard motors and snowmobiles during the winter seasons. Otherwise, we operate in the same manner as our predecessors did. The FFMC was struct to improve upon the marketing procedures and market potential for the northern fisherman. In retrospect, they monopolized the northern fishing industry whereby they influence greatly how we should conduct our own affairs. We take exception to these kinds of tendencies on the part of

Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and it's counterpart, the Fishermens Federation. Being small fishermens, we are astounded by the attempt to ignore our requests to help us to improve upon our mode of fishing on the Great Slave Lake. We view this as their way to push us out of the fresh-water fishing industry and that, they are aided by the given subsidy by the Government of the Northwest Territories, supposedly to bebenefit all the fishermen. Ofcourse nothing is foolproof however, we are of the opinion that any subsidy given for the benefit of fishermen should go equally to all fishermen without exception.

Therefore, we ask that your support as a concerned citizen is needed by us to improve upon our livelihood. We propose that a Coalition of Small Fishermen and Concerned Citizens be organized, which body will undertake the needed research into the problems we keep coming upon in our effort to make a living in line with the standards everyone else takes as their right. Toward this end we, the small non federated fishermen, herein sign our signatures.

Name	Address	Signature
Robert Ross	Box 2022 Hay River	Robert Ross
Donald W. [unclear]	Box 41- Hay River	Donald W. [unclear]
FRANÇOIS ARDIZZON	BOX 1072 Hay RIVER	Francois Ardizzon
MODESTE SANGRIS 873-2148	Box 562 Yellowknife X1A-2N4, N.W.T.	MODESTE SANGRIS
Waf Cayer	Box 2227 Hay River N.W.T.	
Jim Thomas	P.O. 532 Hay River N.W.T.	
Ken Thomas	P.O. Box 509 Hay River, N.W.T.	Ken Thomas
Joe Cayer	Box 2236 HAY RIVER N.W.T.	
Leon Thomas	Box 455 Hay River, N.W.T.	
John Thomas	BOX 455 HAY RIVER, N.W.T.	John Thomas
Harold [unclear]	Box 51 Hay River N.W.T.	

Robert Ross (Statement of Earnings & Expense) 89, 90

NOV 89	Expense	Fish.
11	75.65	NIL
18	133.88	NIL
25	90.14	NIL
Dec. 89 2	244.78	NIL
Dec. 9	1179.13	NIL
Dec. 16	139.77	598.03
Dec 23	199.92	555.36
Dec. 30	516.12	524.48
JAN 6 ⁹⁰	1027.84	884.96
JAN 13	927.30	432.30
JAN 20	533.07	768.47
JAN 27	3996.98	816.91
Feb 3 ⁹⁰	21.42	302.02
Feb 10	28.08	508.83
Feb 17	672.41	770.19
Feb 24	636.98	1815.59
Mar. 3	1171.68	1353.41
Mar 10	132.73	1216.18
Mar 17	1288.68	675.08
Mar 24	304.50	1045.01
Mar 31	1048.41	1253.71
Apr. 7	<u>363.44</u>	<u>59.06</u>
	14,733.01	13,581.59

plus: advances now owing over \$6000.00
 and payments to make ON Fishing Equipment of
 \$440.00 per month, not counting rent.

Robert Ross

Statement of account

Statement # 13576

Week ended 14-Apr-90

With: X29548

LEO THOMAS
 HAY RIVER

XOEORO

Date	Item	Reference	Credit	Charge	Net
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
14-Apr-90	N.W.I. Subsidy	APR 8-14/90	12.75		12.75
14-Apr-90	PAYMENT FOR FISH	FPT: 107164 at: GSI. 1W	55.49		68.24
14-Apr-90	Interest on A/C	1 wk. on \$5926		15.38	52.86
14-Apr-90	UIC Deducted	UIC Earnings \$128		2.88	49.98
14-Apr-90	FFMC A/C	ON ACCOUNT		49.98	.00

In calculating insurable earnings, if any wages or percentage of catch were paid to crew members, they were taken into consid

Status of outstanding accounts:

Account with	Previous Balance	Additional Charges	Applied on A/C	Current Balance
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
FFMC A/C	5991.41		49.98	5941.43

Fish Purchase Ticket

Week ended 14-Apr-90

To: X2754A

ROBERT ROSS

Deliveries at: HAY RIVER

Lake: GREAT SLAVE LAKE AREA 1 RES.

BOX 1771

HAY RIVER N.W.T.

License:

Product				License:		
	09-Apr-90	09-Apr-90	11-Apr-90	Total Weight	Price	Amount
SM DSD X. WHITE	1.5	21.0	12.0	34.5	.550	20.08
MD DSD X. WHITE	81.0	195.0	112.0	388.0	.930	360.84
LG DSD X WHITES		1.4		1.4	1.040	1.46
MD DSD TROUT		2.0		2.0	1.760	3.52
LG HDL. TROUT	4.0	4.0		8.0	1.540	12.32
SM HDL N PIKE		4.0		4.0	.660	2.64
MDLS N PIKE			3.0	3.0	.660	1.98
IMCONMU		4.0		4.0	2.210	8.84
TOTAL	86.5	233.4	127.0	446.9		411.68

DCR NUMBERS : 258491 258493 258500

Coalition of small fisherman
and concerned citizens;

The position taken on freight subsidies in terms of long term planning, and subsidies as should be. in order that we as small fisherman continue to survive and to stimulate interest for potential, and up start fisherman.

1. We must have the subsidy paid directly to small fisherman, and not to FFMC. The subsidy should fluctuate with inflation.
2. The subsidies should be paid only in winter months.
3. The lake subsidies must be at least 48¢ per pd. in order that , we as small fisherman reach a break even point.
4. The subsidies should be paid from Dec. 1 each year to April 20th each year.
5. The amount of subsidies paid should make up one price system all winter.
6. Subsidies paid should not exceed 50 000 pd. Anything over and above 50 000 pd should not be subsidized. And that should apply to every fisherman.
7. We as small fisherman must have \$133.00 per pd. over all pay. and must have that all winter.
8. We as small fisherman must have equipment and gas heavily subsidized, in order for us to compete for a living.

9. Anyone that is in business, or anyone that has a year round job. Especially with gov't should not be subsidized.

10. We as a coalition would like to see some form of compensation for our part in keeping the lake clean. We should like some form of compensation for having the rough fish off the lake.

Reasons

Re: Subsidies: the subsidies paid to FFMC does not help the small fisherman , or up start fisherman. In fact in many cases it hurts the small fisherman. It not only becomes a tool to discredit the small fisherman at community level. But also becomes a tool to the potential of pollution. There for it does not make sense that subsidies should be paid during summer months when, according to FFMC . There's virtually no market for our fish.

Re; Subsidies:

Between the subsidy money and the foreign exchange, FFMC seems to be paying themselves very well to take our fish and when one considers the subsidy money is only a promisory note to FFMC on our accounts . Amounting to about the interest rate they charge , or in some cases less. and at the end of the season FFMC takes our subsidy money to cover the interest plus the amount we incurred by not been subsidized on daily basis and the we are left to sink or swim . One wonders why subsidies are paid at all.

The subsidy money paid by GNWT should be for the betterment of the citizens of the NWT and that is not the case at all. For we as small fisherman are caught or bonded in a catch 22 regime for the more the volume the more the subsidy.

Therefore we as small fisherman are faced with a real delemma. We need equipment to attain ~~volume~~, to attain equipment we must attain credibility , to attain credibility we must attain volume.

Therefore the present system of subsidy , the present system of funding and the present system of FFMC clearly points out two destinctive facts.

1. The fishing on Great Slave Lake is not promoted, or supported as an industry for the purpose of equal participation or mutual benefit.
2. That Great Slave is been used for a purpose outside the Northwest Territories and no real gain is in sight for people living around Great Slave.
In terms of Commercial fishing. Because the policy of northern crew or no subsidies has been completely ignored.
3. The medical card system must not change to fit the purpose,if there is a 2 year residency clause on operators, like wise for hired men. we cannot have 90 days clause for hired men and 2 years to become an owner. The system must be consistant.

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What we object to is being cut off from harvesting what we think should be our rightful share, be it fish or the subsidy given in our best interest. There are a lot more small fishermens than there are big fishermens but never have we seen the small fishermens trying to make impossible the livelihood of the large operator. In fact, we see the big fisherman as an inspiration to the beginner, the trainee, the would be fisherman and the small outfit operator/owner. They do give us hope that one day, we too, will have an outfit like theirs!

But for obvious reasons, our hope is rapidly fading into disrespect for them because we feel we are being exploited in the manner which could only result in forcing us out of commercial fishing on the Great Slave Lake.

We are not saying all of our problems in harvesting fish is the fault of the big fishermens but it is true that they are the greater beneficiary of the subsidy paid by volumes of fish they catch because they are enabled to fish anywhere on the lake in any season while we, the small fishermens, are constrained to fish near and to southern waters of the lake within safe travel distances to harbours of Hay River vicinity.

Added to the problems of our inability to catch comparable volumes of fish to the big fishermens are the excessive interests charged against us for

administrative purposes. We think this to be unnecessary and view this practise by Feshwater Fish Marketing Corporation as an deliberate attempt to discourage small fishermans, thereby forcing them out of the fishing industry by making and creating impossible conditions for the small fisherman to make any profit on year round basis where the kickback at the end of the fishing season would be greater or comparable to the big outfits or atleast, the small outfit could and would receive a fair share of the subsidy paid to FFMC.

We believe that we are not benefitting from the subsidy given to FFMC on our behalf. Because there are several categories of fish pricing. These range from size to seasons of legal commercial fishing on the Great Slave Lake in the N.W.T. We do not know at this time with any certainty who is responsible for this practise but we are quite certain that the Fishermens Federation, representing only the big outfits, do have input into the regulations governing the fishing on the lake since they are the advisory body to the authorities responsible for fish products.

We strongly feel that these responsible bodies charged with our welfare as small fishermans, have utterly failed to safeguard our trust and our right to a meaningful return on our labour.

We, therefore, ask that consideration be paid to us by giving us half of the N.W.T. subsidy directly credited to the small fisherman of Great Slave Lake to help alleviate some of the high cost of operation due to high fuel prices and equipment maintainance. We admit, this alone will not resolve the many problems with which we are faced from day to day but it will help toward resolving some of the problem areas.

There are other matters which we believe is worth mentioning now. This matter is the use of the Purchase Order system of the FFMC. We think the use of the P.O. by small fishermans is harming their credibility at the community level while promoting the credibility of FFMC as a good corporate citizen. FFMC fully knows that the small upstart fisherman may not be able to pay his debt in full until such time he is able to bring in the necessary poundage of fish to pay expenses and debt. We ask you, what would happen in the event a big outfit cuts in and cleans out the Area quota?

Will the small fisherman be able to up-keep his good credit standing if he cannot catch the necessary poundage because a "big outfit" cleaned out the quota where he was? We think not. Atleast not until he moves his nets to another place where there are fish!

Due to these kinds of problems and other factors such as extreme weather, damages to equipment and breakdowns, it is difficult for the small outfit fisherman to fish without help to alleviate the high cost that burdens him most. Thus the need of gaining a fair share of the subsidy paid to FFMC on behalf of the fishermans of Great Slve Lake. Currently, we are the least beneficiaries of this subsidy paid on behalf of the fisherman!

We have attempted to draw attion to our most pressing problems areas over a long period of time but these were unheeded be cause we are the non federated small fishermen of the Great Slave Lake. We are also the fishermen who took new roots in the north. Some of us and our families are born here in the north while a few of us have come from elsewhere, we have spent our entire life fishing the Great Slave Lake. Some of our predecissors are buried here and we maintain the legacy they left us by fishing in the manner that they have. Some of them have used dog-teams in the winter and small skiffs or canoes in the summer.

Likewise, we, the non federated small fisherman use small crafts during the summer with outboard motors and snowmobiles during the winter seasons. Otherwise, we operate in the same manner as our predecissors did. The FFMC was struct to improve upon the marketing procedures and market potential for the northern fisherman. In retrospect, they monopolized the northern fishing industry whereby they influence greatly how we should conduct our own affairs. We take exception to these kinds of tendencies on the part of

Fishermen Fish Marketing Corporation and it's counterpart, the Fishermens Federation. Being small fishermens, we are astounded by the attempt to ignore our requests to help us improve upon our mode of fishing on the Great Slave Lake. We view this as their way to push us out of the freshwater fishing industry and that, they are aided by the given subsidy by the Government of the Northwest Territories, supposedly to benefit all the fishermen. Of course nothing is foolproof however should go equally to all fishermen without an exception.

We, as a Coalition of Small Fishermen and Concerned Citizens, request that our elected members of the N.W.T. have a real hard look at our position and consider the continuity of our survival.

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