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PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR ARCTIC MARINE CONSERVATION

Government of N.W.T.
Released by the Government of N.W.T.

OTTAWA -- A discussion paper outlining a strategy for Arctic marine conservation was released today by Fisheries and Oceans Minister Tom Siddon. "This discussion paper is a critical step towards achieving a balance between conservation and development in the North that can only be achieved through the cooperation of all concerned parties," the Minister said.

Its objective is to ensure the future health and well being of Arctic marine ecosystems. "Achieving this objective will enable Canada to fulfill its national and international responsibilities in the Arctic and provide for the sustained use of marine resources, especially use by Arctic peoples," Mr. Siddon said.

The marine waters of the Canadian Arctic are vast and represent a variety of different visions and expectations. For some, it represents sovereignty, for others, an increased interest in the commercialization of renewable resources or exploration and development of non-renewable resources. Those who have lived there for generations depend on the resources for food, clothing, economic, cultural and social survival.

The proposed strategy outlined in the discussion paper is the result of extensive consultations with interested parties including native groups, non-governmental organizations, industry, educational institutions and federal, provincial, and territorial government departments. It provides a framework for the conservation and management of Arctic marine resources and outlines 10 principles and 6 strategies which will form the basis for future action plans.

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"As Minister of Fisheries and Oceans I have the legislative responsibility for coordinating the oceans policies and programs of the Government of Canada. The Oceans Strategy for Canada that I recently released will enable Canadians to secure maximum economic, scientific, and sovereignty benefits from our oceans. This new initiative for Arctic marine conservation is designed to enhance the development and coordination of conservation policies and the management of Arctic resources. The proposed strategy will provide a focus for further consultations to ensure that the interest of those whose activities affect the Arctic are reflected in the final strategy," Mr. Siddon said.

Interested persons, groups, and institutions are invited to comment on the discussion paper either in writing or directly to departmental officials at one of the regional meetings to be held in the spring. Copies of the discussion paper are available from Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa and departmental regional offices.

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