



December 13, 2021

Commercial Fishing Industry Participants:

Re: Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA Network Update

On December 2, 2021 DFO's Regional Director General sent out a letter (attached) advising that the NSB MPA Network process was being paused because... *"the Department is unable to support the release of the current draft NAP for public consultation as it includes implementation measures which we feel will likely require significant refinement and changes during future regulatory processes."* DFO is concerned about the complexity and scale of management being proposed on a very localized basis and that it is in conflict with how fishery resources are currently managed from the perspective of science, enforcement, monitoring, and management planning.

The Marine Planning Team (MPT) advised the commercial fishing industry on March 22, 2021 that we were concerned the NSB Partners (Federal and Provincial Governments and 17 First Nations) had not responded to the MPT's Scenario 1 map advice provided in February 2020. We also advised that we were concerned the NSB Partners were developing a Scenario 2 map that largely ignored most of the MPT's Scenario 1 input. Our concerns were confirmed following a series of meetings that the MPT had with DFO and the Provincial governments and some of the First Nations partners in the NSB process.

It was clear to the MPT that the NSB primary objective and focus had significantly changed. In our spring meetings, the First Nations partners had adopted a zone-by-zone approach of closures to protect ecological features and areas of access within their territorial areas based on the needs of their respective communities. When the NSB process started in 2019 the primary focus had been on achieving a balance of ecological protection throughout the NSB area, not in each zone, and not for the purpose of preferred or exclusive access by the First Nation community. The primary focus of the NSB process now, appears to be reconciliation with First Nations with marine planning being used to deliver First Nations community priorities.

Reconciliation is a national responsibility of all Canadians and should not be the disproportionate burden of the commercial fishing industry. Furthermore, there should be a reconciliation



strategy that properly identifies the impacts to commercial fishing and the forms and levels of compensation that are necessary to help transition the commercial fishing industry.

The NSB Partners were preparing to release Scenario 2 zoning with an implementation plan (called the Network Action Plan - NAP) and a socio-economic impact assessment for public consultation in early December 2021. MPT engagement on Scenario 2 with the commercial fishing industry was planned for January and February 2022. The NSB Partners planned on announcing a final decision on the NSB MPA Network in September of 2022. In addition to the MPT's concerns that Scenario 2 did not include industry's advice from Scenario 1, we were also concerned that the socio-economic analysis done was significantly underestimating the economic impacts to the commercial fishery, support industries, infrastructure and communities that support the industry.

Realizing there was a major change in focus and that it would have devastating impacts on the commercial fishing industry, the MPT and BC Seafood Alliance started to communicate our concerns to everyone that would listen and had influence on the process. We met and communicated with representatives from First Nations (including some that are not NSB Partners), senior Federal and Provincial government officials, and several politicians (Federal and Provincial) during the summer and fall.

While DFO has now paused the NSB process, they have not provided much clarity on their concerns or how the process will move forward. We fully expect at some time there will be development of a Scenario 3 and the MPT will continue to engage with DFO and the NSB Partners to ensure commercial fishing industry concerns are being considered. When we learn more about where and when the process will continue, we will provide a further update.

Sincerely,

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Attach.



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December 2, 2021

Re: Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area Network planning process and Fisheries and Oceans Canada's position with respect to draft Network Action Plan.

Dear RFA Executive Steering Committee members

The purpose of this letter is to convey Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (the Department) position with respect to the draft Network Action Plan (NAP) for the Northern Shelf Bioregion (NSB) Marine Protected Area (MPA) network, while reaffirming a commitment to continue to work on a path forward to advance this process together.

The Department supports and remains committed to the overall planning process, and recognizes significant work has been achieved and trust has been built between the partners while working together on this important initiative. At this time however, the Department is unable to support the release of the current draft NAP for public consultation as it includes implementation measures which we feel will likely require significant refinement and changes during future regulatory processes. Our specific concern is that the Department will be unable to implement the complexity and scale of management measures for fisheries as proposed in the draft NAP, as they are inconsistent with the Department's regulatory and policy frameworks.

We remain committed to continuing to work collaboratively with partners to advance protections for conservation priorities identified in the NAP using multiple management approaches, including applying our marine conservation tools, as well non-spatial sustainable fisheries management measures. To that end, the Department will continue to seek opportunities to work with all partners to build on NAP components which can be supported and consulted upon.

I recognize that this position will delay the planning process and that network planning partners may wish to meet with Departmental representatives to better understand the considerations underpinning this position, and to hear and discuss our proposed path forward to continue to advance this important process. We are open to meeting bilaterally, or with the NSB MPA Network Committee at its upcoming December 16 meeting, or at a Network Committee meeting convened specifically to answer questions related to this decision.

Regards,

Rebecca Reid,
Regional Director General, Pacific Region
Fisheries and Oceans Canada