

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**  
Assembly of Nova Scotia  
**Mi'kmaq Chiefs**

## **Chiefs Meet with Minister Jordan and Minister Bennett**

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs met with Minister Bernadette Jordan, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Minister Carolyn Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations, this morning to discuss what is happening in Nova Scotia in response to Mi'kmaq harvesting for a moderate livelihood. In their discussions, the Assembly also called on the Ministers to publicly speak out against the racism and violence directed towards Mi'kmaq community members, and to increase enforcement to ensure the safety of everyone, on and off the water.

“We have Mi'kmaq, which includes Elders, women, children, youth and men, who supporting the rights of the Mi'kmaq,” said Chief Terrance Paul, Assembly’s Fishery Lead. “Non-Indigenous fishers and citizens are putting the safety of our people at risk. DFO and the RCMP must address the harassment and illegal activities taken against our people and they must enforce and charge those who are cutting and stealing our traps, shooting flares at our boats, and threatening the lives of our people.”

The Chiefs also wanted to make clear to the Ministers and in turn, the public, that despite what is being incorrectly communicated in mainstream media, Moderate Livelihood is not an illegal fishery.

“Our Rights were affirmed in the Canadian Constitution and the right to fish for a moderate livelihood was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. While the public may not comprehend a fishery outside the realm of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, that does not make our fishery illegal. We called on Canada to help educate the public on the truth and to address the systemic racism that has been a major part in denying our ability to exercise our rights,” said Chief Paul.

The Assembly also stated to DFO, where this is not an illegal fishery, that they must return traps seized from our harvesters exercising their rights in the past.

The Chiefs and Ministers talked about the federal mandate on fish, and the need for consultation, and for Cabinet to finally move these discussions forward. There is still a lot of work to be done and the Nation-to-Nation discussions/relations need to continue.

“We expressed our immediate and pressing concerns, and we did make strides towards meaningful and productive dialogue with Canada. We hope that this is a first step in a positive direction and that we will hear more from the Ministers in the coming days,” said Chief Sidney Peters, Co-Chair of the Assembly.

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