

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Assembly Supports Pictou Landing Netukulimk Harvesters

This morning, Pictou Landing's netukulimk harvesters loaded their vessels to begin their first day of harvesting of the season. They were immediately approached by Conservation and Protection Officers from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and were advised that any traps set would be seized.

"Our community harvesters are fishing with the full authority of Pictou Landing First Nation, and under a stringent management plan developed by our community to ensure safety and conservation," said Chief Andrea Paul, Pictou Landing First Nation.

Pictou Landing's netukulimk harvesters have the full support of their community leadership, as well as the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs (Assembly). The community passed a Band Council Resolution approving the adoption of the netukulimk harvesting management plan. They also shared their plan with the Assembly - who also passed a resolution to both accept this plan and support all harvesters fishing under its authorization.

"The right to fish and sell fish for a moderate livelihood is a constitutionally protected right, affirmed twice by Supreme Court of Canada," said Chief Gerald Toney, Fisheries Lead for the Assembly. "We continue to support authorized harvesters who are exercising their treaty rights, practicing their culture, and doing so safely and respectfully through community Netukulimk Livelihood Plans. We have created a path forward, but it feels like every time we take a couple steps forward, DFO tries to set us back again."

The Assembly and Pictou Landing leadership have communicated the implementation of this harvesting plan to DFO at national and regional levels. DFO was made fully aware of today's launch as, in the spirit of cooperation and transparency, Pictou Landing had provided a copy of their Plan to DFO.

In the interest of respectful treaty relationships, we urge DFO gulf region officers to cease the planned seizure of livelihood gear.

"We are frustrated that DFO is obstructing the exercise of our Treaty Rights again," continued Chief Paul. "Our harvesters want to – and moreover have a Right to - harvest under our management plan. The unwillingness of DFO to properly accommodate the implementation of our Right has become inexcusable. Enough is enough!"

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