

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCI responds to comments by FFAW President Earle McCurdy

ST. JOHN'S, NL – Ocean Choice International (OCI) today clarified comments made in recent days by the head of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW), Mr. Earle McCurdy. Blaine Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of OCI said what Mr. McCurdy has said is misleading and needs to be corrected.

OCI provides the following details in response to Mr. McCurdy's comments:

1. Minimum Processing Requirements

OCI agrees and fully support the inshore fishers in their attempt to have Provincial minimum processing requirements removed and we find that Mr. McCurdy's response on this matter is not clear. To be clear, OCI supports the complete removal of minimum processing requirements for all species, and this includes fishers request to be able to ship out their crab; however, it should be on a level playing field where outside buyers have to compete on the same basis as NL-based buyers. OCI strongly believes that minimum processing requirements are costing jobs in the Province, resulting in less economic value and lower returns for fishers. We can and will be competitive without this restrictive policy and we welcome the opportunity for more free enterprise in the fishery.

2. Clarification on OCI's Exemptions

There is a need to clarify the incorrect information which has been reported on the OCI exemption for exporting its yellowtail flounder. There is a misconception that 100% of the fish that OCI is exporting to countries is for further processing. To the contrary, fish is exported to countries around the world in whole form because the market demands it in that form and it returns the highest economic value to our province. It is important to also note that the Province's highest value groundfish product, turbot, is currently exported 100% in whole or headed and gutted form and this has resulted in the best economic value for the Province and highest returns for fishers.

3. Processing Facilities at Sea

OCI wishes to clarify that the fish that is shipped to countries around the world is indeed processed by Newfoundlanders, only it is processed on a CFIA certified factory that is an at-sea processing facility as opposed to on-land factory. So it is untrue for Mr. McCurdy to say that fish exported from at sea processing facilities is unprocessed. It is graded, frozen, packaged and shipped in whole round and/or headed and gutted form, the same as 80% of our exports from onshore licensed plants.

“The fishery resource is important to the Province and people of Newfoundland and Labrador and it continues to provide a huge economic benefit to our Province and in particular rural Newfoundland and Labrador. It’s very important that we maximize this value to the benefit of all stakeholders,” said Martin Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of OCI.

About OCI

Ocean Choice International is one of Canada’s leading vertically integrated seafood harvesting, processing and marketing companies with operations throughout Atlantic Canada and has sales and marketing offices around the world. An MSC certified company and one of Canada’s largest wild fish quota holders, OCI is a leader in fishing and processing technology and market development.

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