



NEWS RELEASE

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OCI defends credibility, outlines cooperation; seeks answer to proposals before government

ST. JOHN'S—Martin Sullivan, President and CEO of Ocean Choice International, said today his company has been very cooperative with the provincial government regarding the current proposals on flatfish and redfish, and he was disappointed to hear government make comments to the contrary late last week. Sullivan said remarks by fisheries minister Darin King have left global customers, employees and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador questioning the credibility of the company, something he said should never have happened.

“ We placed proposals before the provincial government last fall in an effort to seek a decision on very important matters for the fishing industry,” said Sullivan. “We need change, and we need it now if we are all going to benefit going forward. OCI is a willing participant in discussions with government and have been more than helpful on the provision of information. However, when these discussions veer off to public commentary that is damaging to our reputation, we must take exception.”

Sullivan said he and his team have a business to run, and he owes that to his employees, suppliers and customers around the world. Today he outlined just how cooperative his company has been with government, and he said all he expects from government in return is respect for the important role they play in the fishery in this province and around the world.

“I respect the right of the province to make decisions on matters before them. And, I respect government’s decision to disallow permanent exemptions on flatfish and redfish. In return, OCI expects understanding of its business and the parameters in which it can operate effectively to return an economic benefit to the company and the province.”

OCI has outlined on numerous occasions now the necessity for change in the fishery. Changes in market demand mean there is less and less need for processing fish onshore. In order to free up the marketplace and be competitive with jurisdictions all over the world, restrictions currently placed on flatfish and redfish need to be lifted. Over the years restrictions have been lifted on many other species such as snow crab, mackerel, turbot, lobster and capelin—with some species seeing as much as a 500% increase in value for fishers. OCI is asking the same be done for flatfish and redfish in order to achieve best economic value for the people.

Sullivan said today his company has not taken any options from its current proposals off the table. “We understand now that government is in receipt of all information requested to date, apart from minor clarifications received today. And, we are understanding of government’s decision to disallow permanent exemptions for yellowtail and redfish. However, we must be very clear today that we need long-term, not short-term, exemptions if we are going to be able to achieve anything worthwhile for our employees and the people of the province and to make major capital investments.”

“Our level of commitment to reaching a solution with government which is beneficial for everyone is high,” he said. “This has not changed since we submitted our first proposal in October and the second one in December. We are actually very excited about the opportunity which exists. I must remind everyone that what we have presented to government will result in more full time jobs in the fishery than we’ve had in a very long time. It will result in hundreds of millions of dollars into our provincial economy over just 5 years.”

OCI is hopeful discussions will lead to a positive outcome in the very near future.

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 Sales & Marketing offices around the world. As Canada's largest wild fish quota holder OCI is a leader in fishing and processing technology and market development.

For further information check www.oceanchoice.com/future

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