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For Immediate Release - PEIFA continues to defend Owner Operator Policy

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association (PEIFA) represents over 1250 independent businesses on Prince Edward Island.

The association is and continues to be a fierce advocate for policies, regulations and laws that support independent owner operators.

The cornerstone of these policies is that the person that owns a core fishing license and receives the "beneficial interest" of the license, directly receives those benefits, and is in the boat fishing the license.

There are limited provisions for a Captain to appoint a sub operator as noted in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Commercial Fisheries Licensing Policy for the Gulf Region.

1.1As provided under Section 23 of the Fishery (General) Regulations, where, because of circumstances beyond their control, the holder of a licence is unable to engage in the activity authorized by the licence, a fishery officer who is employed by DFO or any employee of DFO engaged in the issuance of licences may, on the request of the holder or the holder's agent, authorize in writing another person to carry out the activity under the licence.

1.2. The substitute operator provision is an exception to the owner/operator policy and the requirement for fish harvesters to personally fish the licences they hold. The intent of the provision is to provide for the use of a substitute operator in exceptional circumstances. The use of substitute operators is not intended to permit fish harvesters to consistently absent themselves from fishing activity for an entire fishery and/or season.

The recent decision by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans not to grant a sub-operator request to a member of the Provincial Legislature is consistent with the intent and use of the sub operator policy.

The association remains concerned that one exemption leads to another exemption until we don't have an owner operator policy at all.

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association wishes all of our Captains a safe and prosperous fishing season and appreciates the benefits they bring to our coastal communities and the Island.