



## TOFINO HARBOUR AUTHORITY

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Briefing Note

October 30, 2018

### House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans Canada Tofino Harbour Visit

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Tofino Harbour Authority (THA) is a federally incorporated Not-for-Profit Corporation that, under a lease agreement with the Small Craft Harbours Branch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, manages and operates three commercial fishing harbours in Tofino, BC. The 20-year lease agreement was signed in November 1999 and is up for renewal in November 2019. The THA is required by Small Craft Harbours to accommodate all active commercial fisheries within the region. The THA supports a large crabbing fleet, the expanding Nuu-chah-nulth T'aaq-wiihak fleet, a large geoduck fleet, salmon fleet, halibut fleet, tuna fleet, prawn fleet, cod fleet, and individual aquaculture (oyster) harvesters, to name a few.

THA manages three separate wharfs which accommodate approximately 300-350 vessels. On average, the majority of vessels in the harbour are rafted together in order to maintain enough space to accommodate all the vessels. Aside from moorage, the THA offers the following services:

- a 2500lb pedestal crane
- a public access launch ramp
- a grid for the maintenance of vessels
- 20A and 30A power on every float
- approximately 350ft of active loading/offloading floats
- vehicle parking
- a used oil (and pollutant) recycling station
- bathroom, laundry, and showers
- sewage pump out station
- a garbage and recycling program

THA facilities are critical access points for offshore First Nations communities including Opitsaht, Ahousaht, and Hesquiaht, as well as for many private offshore properties and homes. In case of marine emergencies, the THA is the only public access vessel launching facility in Tofino.

#### **SUMMARY OF VISIT**

On Monday October 15<sup>th</sup> 2018, the Standing Committee met with THA Board members, THA management, Tofino Mayor Josie Osborne, and harbour users. After brief introductions, the group toured THA's main fishing harbour, 4<sup>th</sup> St Harbour, and then visited one of THA's non-core facilities,

Armitage Point (locally known as Crab Dock), which is up for divestiture by Small Craft Harbours. During the tour, the Committee viewed infrastructure, daily operations, and engaged in conversations with individuals from Tofino's commercial fishing harbour community. Some of the main topics which were discussed during the tour included:

- the importance and growth of the T'aaq-wiihak fishery
- the abilities and challenges for the THA to accommodate commercial fishing needs with ongoing changes in federal fishery management
- the Small Craft Harbour divestiture process and how it affects the THA
- the lease agreement between Small Craft Harbours and the THA
- the management, maintenance, and policy enforcement of Small Craft Harbour infrastructure at the THA

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list outlines the main recommendations which the THA would like to re-emphasize to the Standing Committee with regards to the Fisheries and Oceans Small Craft Harbour program in Tofino:

1. **Recognize the growth of the Nuuchahnulth T'aaq-wiihak Fishery, and ensure that funding is allocated to directly support its infrastructure and service needs through the THA.** Five Nuuchahnulth Nations, including Ahousaht, Ehatesaht/Chinekintaht, Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, gained recognition in 2009 from the BC Supreme Court that they maintain aboriginal rights to harvest and sell seafood within their territories. From this court decision, the THA has seen a dramatic increase in T'aaq-wiihak use of and dependency on the facility, and the THA is determined to work with Small Craft Harbours to support this fishery through the development of infrastructure and services.
2. **Consider the Harbour Authority business model which relies upon recreational sector income to subsidize commercial fishing facilities, and incorporate that consideration into Small Craft Harbour's approach to fulfilling its mandate.** The funds generated from recreational harbour use at the THA subsidize moorage and service rates for the commercial fishing sector. In applications for funding, Small Craft Harbours does not consider the recreational sector though, in the business model of most Not-for-Profit Harbour Authorities, the recreational sector directly supports commercial fishing fleets to ultimately achieve Small Craft Harbour's mandate. Recreational income accounts for approximately 50-60% of THA's annual income. If the THA must limit recreational use to accommodate the growing fisheries as opposed to expanding infrastructure to accommodate all users, within reason, there will be a direct negative impact on the services that the THA can afford to provide to the commercial fishing sector.
3. **Expand the enforcement ability of Not-for-Profit Harbour Authorities such as the THA.** Currently, as a Not-for-Profit Harbour Authority managing a Small Craft Harbour, the THA has found it extremely difficult to enact effective and prompt enforcement when harbour users disregard rules, policies, or fees. The THA would like to see Small Craft Harbours develop an enforcement plan to better support Harbour Authorities in providing efficient, safe, and orderly

facilities. For the safety of staff and community, and to be respected as a governing body, Harbour Authorities need enforcement ability, either directly or through another governing body.

**For more information:**

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