



The Council of the Federation Reiterates its Position on the Canadian Sealing Industry

May 13, 2009 – The Council of the Federation held a conference call on May 11, 2009 to discuss the proposed trade ban on seal products by the European Union (EU).

The discussion took place at the request of Newfoundland & Labrador Premier Danny Williams and Nunavut Premier Eva Ariak.

The Council expressed a strong objection to the EU's proposed ban which is not based on fact or on scientific information. The proposed ban could be inconsistent with World Trade Organization obligations and with the commitment made by Leaders at the G-20 meeting on April 2, 2009 to refrain from imposing new trade barriers.

The Council indicated its support of the federal government's public commitment to take action at the World Trade Organization should the EU proceed with the proposed ban. The Council also agreed to work with the federal government to reverse the position of the EU. Failing an acceptable resolution, it was agreed that this issue will be addressed during the comprehensive Canada-EU trade negotiations that were launched on May 6, 2009.

The proposed ban on Canadian seal products by the EU would threaten the economic viability of the Canadian sealing industry. It would also have a devastating effect on the livelihood of thousands of Canadians in the many northern and rural communities that depend on the seal harvest. The reported exemption for Inuit communities within Canada does not yet permit commercial sales onto the EU market for pelts harvested by Inuit.

BC Premier Campbell was unable to participate in the conference call due to the provincial election.

The Council of the Federation is comprised of all 13 provincial and territorial Premiers. It enables Premiers to work collaboratively to strengthen the Canadian federation by fostering a constructive relationship among the provinces and territories, and with the federal government.

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