

Letter from the Premier



The recent federal decision to close the Northern and Gulf cod fisheries is strong evidence of a need for an alternative to our present approach to fisheries management. There is a need for a more rigorous approach to fisheries management, one that ensures these stocks recover to their historic levels and that other fisheries do not fall to the same fate.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is calling for a new approach to fisheries decision making: a joint management regime that would effectively integrate federal and provincial responsibilities, reduce federal-provincial conflict over fisheries policy, provide a stable framework for resource management and industry investment, and remove the potential for arbitrary or inconsistent fisheries management decisions.

While the approach set out in this paper is new, our commitment to joint management is not. Newfoundland and Labrador has been pursuing joint management for almost a quarter century and has a well-developed proposal to put this type of sustainable development structure in place. There is an urgent need to act, and this paper lays out a detailed plan which will form the basis for negotiations with the Government of Canada.

The fact that other partners are also dependent upon the resources adjacent to Newfoundland and Labrador must also be recognized, and this fact must not be used as an excuse for inaction. The proposal set out in this document respects and preserves the traditional and historic rights of non-Newfoundland and Labrador interests in our fishery. This plan is put forward as a basis for change. We will work with all our partners in the Federation to further develop and improve our joint management plan so that it can serve as a model for fisheries management right across our nation.

This call for joint fisheries management reflects the will and desire of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to be engaged as equal partners in the Canadian Federation. It demonstrates the type of flexibility that is needed to ensure that governments remain adaptable and responsive to contemporary realities and the people they have been mandated to serve. I believe this type of flexibility must be the basis for renewal, growth and strengthening of our great nation.

In coming months the contents of this paper will stand as a basis for discussion and action. It is my hope that the Government of Canada will engage in discussions on the basis of this paper. I also look forward to hearing the views and concerns of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as we seek to advance this issue so critical to our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger D. Grimes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger D. Grimes
Premier, Newfoundland and Labrador