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Press Release: For Immediate Release

Qalipu First Nation Expresses Deep Concern Over Redfish Fishery Allocation

February 7, 2024, Corner Brook—Qalipu First Nation (QFN) is disappointed and deeply concerned about the recent announcement on the reopening of the Unit 1 redfish fishery.

In a letter addressed to Fisheries Minister Diane Debouthillier, Jenny Brake, the Interim Chief of Qalipu First Nation highlighted the community's shock upon learning the details of the allocation of the fishery.

“Qalipu has been an active participant in the Redfish Advisory Committee for nearly eight years through its commercial fishing entity, Mi'kmaq Commercial Fisheries. We have strived to provide valuable input towards the balanced and equitable reopening of this crucial fishery yet this announcement revealed that the vast majority of the allocation would be directed to interests in Nova Scotia and Quebec, primarily benefiting the offshore fleet. This decision marks a significant policy reversal, particularly considering that offshore vessels were banned from the Gulf nearly 50 years ago due to their unsustainable harvesting practices.”

Interim Chief Brake stated further that Qalipu First Nation has consistently advocated for a specific allocation based on the principles of adjacency and historical attachment. The redfish fishery has been integral to the Gulf Coast's commercial fishing industry for over a century, with deep-rooted connections to the community spanning generations.

Despite Qalipu First Nation's efforts to engage with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to ensure Indigenous communities are prioritized in the allocation process, the community feels its concerns have been disregarded. The current situation leaves inshore participants largely excluded from participating in the fishery, with offshore entities effectively controlling access to the resource.

“This decision seriously jeopardizes the livelihoods of countless Indigenous fishers and undermines faith in the government's commitment to Indigenous reconciliation. Qalipu First Nation urges the government to reconsider the announcement and prioritize an inshore and Indigenous-centered approach to the redfish allocation policy.”

Additionally, Qalipu First Nation formally requests an immediate, in-person meeting with the Minister to discuss this matter in greater detail.

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