National Advisory Panel on Marine Protected Area Standards

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My name is Alain d'Entremont and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Scotia Harvest and O'Neil Fisheries Limited. Our multi-generational family businesses was built from my grandfather's small business to our role today where we operate 8 less than 65' fishing vessels that fish for scallop or Groundfish around the coast of Nova Scotia and the South Coast of Newfoundland. We rely on these operations to supply raw material to our processing plant in Digby, Nova Scotia which provides valuable year-round employment to over 70 people in a small community. I am also the President of the Full Bay Scallop Association, which represents the majority of license and quota holders in the Bay of Fundy inshore scallop fishery, our membership includes Nova Scotia and New Brunswick license holders and multiple First Nation communities around the Maritimes.

Thank you for the invitation to present to this panel, but I feel I must highlight the fact that I am concerned that upon reviewing the list of presenters, a significant number of Atlantic Canadian harvesters or industry groups are missing. Many of my colleagues representing companies and groups of harvesters fishing mobile gear offshore that are very likely to be directly impacted by any decisions on Marine Protected Area standards are absent from this list and I am hopeful there will be other opportunities provided for their participation, especially given that we, as an industry, have taken a leading role in the establishment of protected areas and continue to support the use of rigorous scientific 'facts' in governing protected area planning.

My own experience and knowledge on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) has been acquired through personal interest and participation in the various processes to create the MPAs currently in place or proposed in Maritimes Region and the more recent MPA Network Planning process. I have read the literature, seen the practice and experienced the outcomes.

At heart, I hope that this panel is not intending to force a reopening of many of the discussions we have had related to management and protection standards in currently existing MPAs. I feel that this panel is being tasked with producing guidance on something that should have been properly debated and decided many years ago, perhaps even prior to the Government of Canada making the commitment to reaching 10% MPAs in our oceans. I believe the reason we are here today, in this format, is because the regional differences in application of these standards has been inconsistent and it is difficult to negotiate something when all stakeholders are operating under different expectations. This could all have been avoided had we delayed this rush to create MPAs until a standard of protection that aligned with the conservation outcomes had been agreed upon.

My own engagement with MPAs started approximately 10 years ago and was quite simply based on the reality that by operating Mobile Gear vessels, our business was informed that we were guaranteed to be impacted by any decisions surrounding MPAs. While this may have been true, every other gear-type seems to believe they are immune from impacts related to MPAs because they perceive their fishing gear to have less of an impact on the ecosystem, although this may not align with the objectives of any spatial closure. As the targets have become more of a reality, many advocates for other forms of ocean use are operating with the belief they too should also be immune. It is unfortunate

the Department has used this apparent confusion to provide different fleet sectors and industries to operate in these discussions with different underlying rules, that has impaired forward progress and general understanding.This makes any discussions around boundaries and zoning very difficult, when you do not have every involved party in the same room playing by the same rules. It is clear to me, that many conservation priorities used to select MPAs are at risk from activities other than Mobile Gear fishing and those groups have not been as engaged in the process causing many delays and difficulties for everyone involved.

In terms of the IUCN guidelines and Canada's requirement to reach the commitments, I believe that we must be able to have clearly defined objectives that can be checked with rigorous monitoring programs to assess the management effectiveness. I also feel that the management of MPAs must evolve based on the results of the monitoring – this includes both increasing and decreasing levels of conservation protection. Fishermen often comment that when working with DFO, there is nothing more permanent than a temporary closure. This is because we often draw a box around something with a goal of attempting to protect or conserve something, and never check to see if we've achieved what we've set out to do. This is clearly shown with the "Haddock Box" on the Eastern Scotian Shelf that has now become the Emerald/Western Bank Conservation Area and will soon be entered into Regulations despite assurances otherwise only six months ago – all with original conservation objectives that have not been detectably achieved despite 30 years of closure to the fishing industry.

I believe that in order to meet our commitments in a timely, manageable and measurable manner, we are going to require large multiple use MPAs that include both highly protected components where a certain unique feature exists surrounded by areas that are managed according to the conservation objectives therein. However, it remains incumbent on Canada to be able to monitor and assess the effectiveness of these MPAs. In order to properly monitor the success of MPAs on fish populations and the MPAs themselves, extractive research activities, such as the trawl survey where much of the information that this process has been collected from and long-line halibut surveys must be permitted, otherwise how can we tell if we are doing the 'right' approach? Currently I believe the IUCN generally suggests that these should not be permitted in the higher protection classes (3 and below). This would make the monitoring of these MPAs and their impact on the broader ecosystem very difficult to measure and perhaps impossible, therefore is must be permitted.

The context of marine spatial management is much different than the terrestrial context. Outside of unique features, habitats are rarely precisely identifiable due to information gaps. The survival or rebuilding potential of most fish stocks cannot normally be linked to one specific area as fish stocks travel over very large distances during the course of a year and have a complex ecosystem relationship that can be driven by environment just as much as removals. Protecting discrete or continuous environments will not be effective in species rebuilding, as the underlying driver is not linked to human activities in the ocean, but larger issues related to climate change and oceanographic variation. Using a less efficient design where more heterogenous habitats are protected actually helps in terms of creating larger MPAs with varying levels of protection. If conservation priorities within an MPA cannot be linked to restriction of fishing activities, we must ask why this becomes a default choice. From my own fishing experience, certain parts of our fishing area, such as the Bay of Fundy and Georges Bank contain very high energy habitat where the bottom is moving daily with tides and storms. Under the

IUCN criteria, if these areas were part of an MPA, you could envision that this type of habitat could be fished sustainably with bottom contact mobile gear without negatively impacting the function of that habitat and conservation priorities. This is true also of areas within existing closures.

A very obvious example in my own business where MPAs are very likely to provide no value to the fishing industry and the actual stock is the scallop fishery. Scallop tend to be mostly sessile organisms that are harvested based on exploitation targets that are derived from surveys that estimate the density of commercial sized scallop over an area, along with recruit sized scallop as well. We then calculate the amount of commercial sized scallop that could be removed over that area and set quotas below that while taking into account the size and age of those scallop including their potential for growth. With an MPA that would not permit any mobile gear scallop fishing in that area, we would lose that area forever from the available harvest. For example, if an MPA encompassing 10% of the Bay of Fundy were established, there would be a corresponding 10% reduction in the available yield to the fishery. This would be a serious concern. In the Bay of Fundy, using recent year quotas as a guide, this would mean 150 mt less yield to the fishery annually with basically no benefit to the fishery or scallop population and no benefit to the high-energy environments which scallop are found. Instead, this corresponds to $4,000,000 annual income stripped from local communities. It is vital that we do a better job of taking into account the communities that will be negatively impacted by MPAs the hardest and not prohibit more than is required to meet our commitments and modify our approaches to achieve the conservation objectives linked with fact and not rhetoric provided through the media.

In conclusion, the studies that show that fisheries can benefit from MPAs are very often found in areas were exploitation and a rigorous science and management process do not exist. This is not the case in the fisheries I am involved in. These fisheries have rigorous science programs that inform fisheries management and we have many controls in place to manage the fishery. At the size we are currently discussing, MPAs will not perform better than fisheries management informed by science. We have temporal spatial closures to protect spawning or at risk periods in the life-cycle of many species and our small fish protocol protects nursery areas. With individual quotas or enterprise allocations, we have the most to gain and the most to lose in terms of the future potential of those resources. As such, we incorporate many sources of uncertainty in our fisheries management recommendations, and therefore the potential for MPAs to perform as “insurance” against fisheries management is unnecessary. We must get this right, we must monitor the effectiveness of our decisions and be willing to admit when we are wrong and adjust accordingly informed by that monitoring. I believe that reaching 10% is achievable, and hope that any future commitments beyond that are discussed and properly understood prior to further commitments that stand to impact the communities least able to voice their perspectives on the matter.

Thank you.