

January 4, 2013

TO: Locals - DFO
National Executive
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

RE: **Ecosystems and Fisheries Management (EFM) Sector UMCC**

The Ecosystems and Fisheries Management (EFM) Sector UMCC met on November 23rd, 2012 with Brother Todd Panas, President, and Brother Luc Paquette, Service Officer, attending. The following is a synopsis of the discussions held.

David Balfour, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chairperson, opened the meeting by advising that the EFM UMCC would now include the Program and Policy Sector. Therefore, going forward, any points related to Program Policy are to be directed to this Committee. Program Policy is now headed by Assistant Deputy Minister Trevor Swerdfager.

UEW welcomed this initiative, especially with the advent of TBS future plans to transfer policy development down to the departmental level into two tiers bargaining which has the potential to make policies more engaging with the Union. Time will tell whether this is going to be a positive initiative but UEW expects the future to be challengingly interesting.

Agenda Items

UEW advised that it was launching an anti-bullying/paternalism campaign and has been distributing buttons. UEW hopes that the next Deputy Minister will be supportive of this initiative. Employee support is positive and the hope is that management will support the campaign as the goal is to work towards total elimination of harassment, bullying and discrimination at the workplace.

Fishery Officers' NWMD

The Department advised that the PM5, PM6, GT2 to GT5 Job Descriptions have been approved and are waiting for the Organization and Classification Centre of Expertise (OCCOE) to come back with final classifications.

There is a small issue for the PM5 and PM6 positions inasmuch as they don't fit in the Department's pre-approved National Organizational structure on minimum requirement for supervision. The Department will be meeting with the Executive Committee to review the issue and will communicate the OCCOE's classifications to staff.

UEW asked whether or not focus groups or surveys were conducted with staff, how many were selected and whether the Union members had been invited. The Department responded that it did not have those immediate numbers but could provide them. The Department advised that invitations had been sent to staff and that all Regions had received employee representation of at least one, and in most cases, two employees per Region.

Fishery Officers' NWMD (Cont'd)

The Department estimates that 10% of the organization was involved in the various focus groups and confirmed that Union members had participated in at least two of the groups.

Workforce Adjustment (WFA) as a Standing Item on the EFM Agenda

The Department signified that it did not see the pertinence of keeping such an item on the agenda since the Regions meet regularly and the Union already meets at the National level through its own WFA every two months. All information given at this Committee meeting is either old news or repetitive since subject matters are dealt with in a more efficient and timely manner through other venues. After some discussion, it was agreed to keep the item as an open-ended one.

Impacts of the Changes to the Fisheries Act and Establishment of the Fisheries Protection Program

UEW expressed its disappointment with the way this government is watering down the Fisheries and Environmental Assessment Acts. UEW advised that it wrote letters to the Prime Minister and Minister denouncing this devolution and for allowing industry to make profits over our natural resources.

UEW also posed the question as to whether or not the Department had any intention of implementing any of the 75 recommendations emanating from the Cohen Enquiry Report, especially in relation to the wild salmon policy.

UEW reminded the Department that the number one priority for Canadians is the Environment and UEW does not see the changes to the legislation helping to preserve our environment. UEW reiterated that the number one mandate for DFO is conservation which includes Habitat and shared its concerns that as a whole, we are getting away from the prime core objective of conservation. UEW endorses the Cohen Enquiry Report and believes that there is a lot that DFO can address inasmuch as the Report noted that there was flexibility within the departmental budgets.

The Department responded that it is currently conducting an analysis of the Report and since the Report was commissioned by the Prime Minister, it will be receiving direction from the Prime Minister's Office with respect to responding to the recommendations noted in the Report.

The Department also indicated that it is of the view that the amendments to the Fisheries Act allow it to have a more focused approach on the fisheries of significance and aboriginal recreational commercial purposes and that conservation remains the core mandate objective of the Department.

Ecosystems Fisheries Management (EFM) 2012-2015 Strategy

UEW enquired as to who sits on this Committee and the Department advised that because EFM is an operations committee with a national scope, the composition of the Committee included the Assistant Deputy Minister (David Balfour) and Regional Directors.

UEW spoke to the fact that over the years when strategic exercises were initiated, the number one key player was missing: i.e., the employee. Engaging the people that do the work and consulting the lowest common denominator at the national level seems to have never been considered.

UEW also cares about a vibrant public service but is of the opinion that the Department is “missing the boat” in having these strategic meetings at the senior level and not bringing in the grassroots people from all Sectors. UEW suggested that an open-door policy was not sufficient and challenged the Department to listen to its most important resource by inviting them as observers or, where apparent, as presenters.

UEW suggested that these actions would help greatly in restoring the morale of employees within the Department and that the Department had to look beyond its simple legislated obligation to meet with Unions and become proactive in engaging staff and returning DFO to its status of employer of choice.

Small Craft Harbours - National Model Work Descriptions

The Department gave a quick update on the National structure and the status of NWMDs and advised that the structure is comprised of 168 FTE nationally.

The Department is continuing to work on a standardized NWMD structure for the three streams; i.e., Engineering, Client Services, and Integrated Program Planning and Analysis. Each of these streams is managed by a regional manager position (AS 6) and the Department is working on the subordinate positions to the AS6 positions which have been sent to the OCCOE for review.

Ecosystems Fisheries Management - NCR - Public Service Employee Survey Action Plan

The Department signified that it was very happy with the response to the Survey. It is trying to better communicate the collective goals and takes the results of the survey quite seriously.

UEW noted that after 13 years of surveys, from 1999 to 2011, the Department continues to have problems with respect to the alarming issues of harassment, discrimination and faith in senior management. UEW made the point that by the time action plans are implemented, the Department finds itself conducting the next PSES and deplores the fact that the Department is continuously playing catch up.

**Ecosystems Fisheries Management NCR Public Service Employee Survey Action Plan
(Cont'd)**

This being said, UEW did offer some solutions to help better the employee opinion of the Department and therefore help restore employee morale and productivity; i.e., making the JLP mandatory training to managers as participation of the JLP is currently employee populated, holding 360 degree performance appraisal techniques in order to eliminate rubber stamp processes, engage Unions to share ideas and solutions, make harassment a standing item on the agendas of every Sector meeting and National UMCC meetings until it is eliminated, and encourage the Sector to have its own surveys and be proactive and complement the Departmental survey.

UEW also pointed out that it believes the Values and Ethics Code to be a good tool to render employees and managers alike accountable for their behaviours and actions. Putting somebody on leadership 101 and issuing a certificate is not enough as it would be unreasonable to presume that any individual could become a better manager simply by receiving a certificate.

The Department replied that its goal is to achieve results in terms of what is practical as some movement is better than none. Realizing that these small actions may not solve all the problems, the Department is of the opinion that making the effort to make change is a step in the right direction and that it does believe that the PSES is a step in the right direction to improving processes such as the Employee Performance Reviews.

Submitted on behalf of the national office