

December 23, 2009

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

RE: **DFO NUMCC - December 1, 2009**

Brother William Pynn, UEW National President, Brother Daryl Hoelke, UEW Executive Assistant, and Sister Paula Dignan, Service Officer, attended the December 1, 2009 meeting. The following represents a synopsis of the discussions that took place.

The Department outlined the Sector re-organizations, specifically Oceans falling under Science and the return of a Corporate Human Resources Sector. The Department stated that these changes were brought about following a Consultant's Report on how to streamline reporting and placing programs where they fit best. UEW noted that in order to minimize concerns and questions at the workplace, consultation with the bargaining agents regarding organizational change is required.

The Deputy Minister spoke about the judicial review with respect to B.C. Salmon. Supreme Court Justice Bruce Cohen has been appointed to oversee the judicial inquiry into the collapse of Fraser River Sockeye with a report due out in August 2011. Justice Cohen has been directed to investigate "as broad a scope as possible" and the investigation will encompass a wide range of potential factors "including but not limited to, the impact of environmental changes along the Fraser River, marine environmental conditions, aquaculture, predators, diseases, water temperature and other factors."

The Deputy Minister welcomes the review as she believes that the work done by DFO is above reproach. She acknowledged that employees may be concerned with the review and that many will be called to testify. A special secretariat will be set up at DFO to provide the Review Committee with information. UEW asked what kind of protection will be afforded employees called to testify and the Department assured those present that all judicial review procedures will be reviewed with staff so that any concerns or questions can be answered.

### **Review of Action Items:**

An update on DFO's exit interview process was provided. There was a discussion about how to increase the number of interviews to fully capture why employees leave the Department.

From the responses to date, most departures are attributed to promotions or employees going to longer-term contracts. The Department noted that very few surveys were negative.

Information was provided with respect to the use of Temporary Help Agencies. DFO advised that the spending on these remains constant. UEW encouraged the Department to consider hiring indeterminate or determinate employees rather than using Temporary Help Agencies.

DFO advised that it has been in contact with Environment Canada regarding the Tracking Tool for UMCCs and will commit to implementing the same sort of Tool at DFO.

### **BASR 2 and Strategic Review**

BASR 2 is complete and DFO will now begin preparations for the upcoming Strategic Review. DFO stated that BASR 2 did not identify any savings and the focus is now on proposals for re-investments. UEW advised DFO that BASR at its conception has been a concern for employees and a proper roll-out of the results is essential to ensure that there are no misconceptions of what the review determined. DFO committed to communicate this information to its employees in the near future.

### **Pandemic Planning**

DFO provided an update on its Pandemic Plan. In essence, the Department is working in conjunction with Treasury Board and will follow government-wide protocols. Employees and management receive regular updates via the DFO Intranet and in the Loop.

UEW noted that contract staff are not paid when they don't work and so may come into work sick as they have no sick leave. DFO cannot send someone home but will encourage all staff to use healthy workplace practices and will deal with individual situations on a case-by-case basis to provide solutions to potential problems.

### **DFO Symposium**

The Theme of the DFO Labour Relations' Symposium is "Workplace Change and Challenges". The Symposium Steering Committee is still working on the agenda and will ensure that once the Symposium is adjourned, it will be just the beginning of further work to ensure that deliverables promised at the Symposium are followed up. There will be an evaluation of the Symposium with a clear determination of future Symposia. UEW reiterated that DFO must fully commit to have all senior managers attending and participating in social networking with the bargaining agents.

### **Round Table**

UEW requested information regarding the possible DFO office closure in Charlottetown, P.E.I. The Deputy Minister spoke to the issue stating that she acknowledges that this is of considerable concern to the staff in the Region and that all efforts are being made to keep staff informed of developments on the issue. Presently, there is no official decision with respect to the issue and to speculate would be imprudent. The Deputy Minister did state that she hoped that a decision would be confirmed within one year as she acknowledges that the uncertainty is an added stress on all employees.

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to the issues noted above, please do not hesitate to communicate with the national office.

Yours fraternally,

William Pynn,  
National President,  
Union of Environment Workers.