



For Immediate Release  
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## **Liberals call on Minister Shea to meet with Atlantic lobster fishermen**

OTTAWA – In the wake of intergovernmental infighting over a failing lobster industry, Liberal MPs Gerry Byrne, Denis Coderre and Lawrence MacAulay want to know if Conservative Fisheries Minister Gail Shea will meet with a coalition of groups representing Atlantic lobster fishermen on Parliament Hill today.

“Frustration and disappointment is mounting among fishers over Minister Shea’s silence in the wake of this crisis,” said Mr. Byrne, the Liberal fisheries critic. “Lobster prices are fifty percent lower than just two years ago, buyers have stopped buying and margins are squeezed to the brink – yet we have a Minister from Prince Edward Island with absolutely no plan for what was a \$1-billion industry to Atlantic Canada.”

With the Conservative government awash in indecision over plummeting lobster prices and the industry at risk just days into this year’s lobster season, Liberal MPs invited fisheries associations from Quebec, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador to Parliament Hill to have their voices heard by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

“The five fisheries associations asked Minister Shea for a meeting last week and they continue to await her reply, so we’re taking matters into our own hands,” said Mr. MacAulay. “Minister Shea’s own cabinet colleague has called her to act and we’ve heard leaked federal proposals through provincial legislators – why can’t we just hear from the Minister herself?”

Liberal caucus colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia called on the government to improve Employment Insurance fairness, ease access to credit and support for inventory costs, and government supported capacity reduction where warranted. The MPs also said that the federal government must reinvest in lobster marketing, product research and development, and industry infrastructure such as lobster holding pounds.

“Just days into this year’s season, the livelihoods of thousands of lobster fishermen and their families are in serious jeopardy – yet Minister Shea is nowhere to be seen,” said

Mr. Coderre. “She won’t meet with fisheries leaders, she won’t meet with her provincial counterparts and she won’t act to deal with this crisis. This is not leadership.”

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