

Area "A" Crab Association

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To: The Honourable Prime Minister of Canada
Mr. Stephen Harper
Ottawa Canada

Dear Sir:

The Area "A" Crab Association is writing to petition you to stop the de-staffing of Canada's Lightstations. Our fleet is one of the most active fleets in the Northern B.C. region, one of the roughest and most tidal areas on the B.C. coast. We need all the eyes and ears we can get to make sure that we can predict the weather and conduct our business in a safe manner. We rely on properly manned lightstations that can give us forewarning of fast moving fronts by giving real time air pressure data, sudden wind shifts, reportings of unexpected wind velocities, building coastal swells and seas and many of us have experienced in our lifetime or know individuals who have been helped because of the watchfulness of manned light houses. A lighthouse keeper picked up a very weak mayday signal from a vessel I was on that had broken down on the southern edge of Queen Charlotte Sound in 1986 and was instrumental in sending help before a major storm engulfed our vessel. There are countless stories of this nature on our coast. The destaffing of Light houses will not save the taxpayers money, the unmanned lighthouses will still need constant maintenance, are very unreliable and prone to breaking down at the most inopportune time, that is when the weather is the most inclement, and traffic in our region is only going to grow exponentially over the next few years, with the growth of the cruise ship industry, tanker and freighter traffic and recreational vessels. The proliferation of more advanced navigation systems is not an excuse to take away the human element from our coast, in fact it is allowing many more vessels to travel our inshore and offshore waters than would previously have ventured out and I have yet to see a kayak with advanced navigational equipment and they are now very common along our coast.

Please reconsider the decision to de staff our lightstations. They are of critical importance to those of us who make our living from the sea.

Dan Edwards
Executive Director
Area "A" Crab Association

cc. Michael Ignatieff
Jack Leighton
Gail Shea
Steve Bergh
George Dupont