

PCSCA



Pacific Coast Shrimpers Cooperative Association
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September 9, 2009

The Honourable Gail Shea
House of Commons
Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1A 0A6

The Honourable George Da Pont
Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Commissioner's Office
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1A 0E6

Re De-Staffing Lighthouses- Pacific Coast

Dear Hon. Shea and Da Pont:

The Pacific Coast Shrimpers Cooperative Association (PCSCA) represents the active shrimp-by-trawl industry in British Columbia. There are approximately 248 licensed shrimp-trawl vessels in the province.

In 1998 the Shrimp Trawl Caucus Members, PCSCA Directors, and Members of the PCSCA went on record to oppose the planned de-staffing of 14 west coast lighthouses. It is our understanding that the current government is, once again, planning to de-staff lighthouses on Canada's Pacific Coast.

As you are aware lightkeepers provide a number of vital services including accurate and timely weather updates, assist mariners with mechanical problems, and support for those forced to seek shelter from foul weather, and assist in rescue operations and research.

Many of our commercial fishing members contact lightkeepers for on-site weather information to help guide them in making important decisions when they are travelling to and from the fishing grounds. Your records will show that between 1986 and 1991 alone

Lighthouse Keepers from 30 lighthouses in Canada answered public requests for information or assistance (including emergency response) a total of 32,042 times.

Lighthouse Keeps also play an important role in protecting the marine environment. Once again your own records will show that the Carmanah lighthouse was the first reporting station for oil from the Nestucca spill in December, 1989; this early warning gave responders a number of days start on the cleanup process. With both an increase in commercial and recreational traffic, Lighthouse Keeps are well placed to carry out such vital tasks.

In 1987 the LeBlond Commission heard 41 speakers and received 189 submissions - all of which opposed automation of west coast lighthouses. In addition the ad hoc Parliamentary committee which toured BC communities in December, 1994 found the same results. British Columbian coastal residents and those that both make their living from the sea, contribute to our food self-reliance, and support of our coastal communities, clearly want Lighthouse Keepers to remain in place. It is the belief of many that automation will result in an increased and unwanted level of risk to commercial and sports fishers, recreational boaters, commercial mariners, aviators and others who utilize the waters of our Pacific Coast.

According to the BC Ministry of Environment's Ocean and Marine Fisheries Division Report- In 2005, British Columbia's Ocean Economy was valued at \$11.6 Billion. That same year the impact of this industry on the GDP was \$11.1 Billion, generated employment for 167,805 persons and a labour income of \$7.6 Billion.

As the Province of British Columbia, and Canada, both continue to receive increased benefits from our Ocean Sector it is shameful, for any government, to save those few dollars allocated to maintaining Lighthouse keepers at their station and, to increase the risk to fishermen, tourists, and our environment.

As a matter of safety alone, the Pacific Coast Shrimpers Cooperative Association opposes ANY reduction in staff or services at any of the west coast lighthouses. It is our position that lightkeepers' job descriptions should, in fact, more likely be expanded in order to recognize and support the important role they play in marine safety, environmental monitoring, communications and search and rescue operations, and they should be adequately equipped and trained to carry out these important roles.

Respectfully submitted, on behalf of the men, women, and families of the British Columbia's shrimp trawl fishing industry.

W. E. Lorne Clayton



Facilitator PCSCA

Cc: BC Minister of Environment- BC Seafood Alliance