

Dear MP Chris d'Entremont, MP Rick Perkins, Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray

We are sending this letter to address the dire situation that our port infrastructure finds itself in throughout south west Nova Scotia. Each harbor authority throughout our region has operated until now in a manor where they lobby our local small craft harbor office for a portion of the severely underfunded budget, they are allocated each year. Because of the lack of small craft harbor funding in an industry that has grown faster than could have been anticipated, we are constantly trying to mitigate backlogged issues rather than moving forward with industry needs at our wharves. Each authority tries to advocate they need the funding more than the next port when in reality they all drastically require the funding. Our wharves in South West Nova Scotia house the last independently operated, sustainable and viable fishery; our lobster fishery. Our wharves were designed many years ago for vessels exactly 50% the size of the ones we operate today. Recent lobster vessels have surpassed the 2-million-dollar price tag. We are currently tying these 2-million-dollar vessels in extremely unsafe locations because we have no other areas to house them. There has not ever been a reduction in lobster licenses, but our vessels have doubled in size. This means we're taking up 200% of the real estate within our harbors that we did 50 years ago when most these wharves were built.

A brand-new vessel was recently tied on the windward side of a wharf in East Pubnico during a storm. There was simply nowhere to place this vessel within the sheltered portions of the wharf due to overcrowding. This vessel broke free of its lines and floundered on the nearby rocks. It is estimated around 1.5 million dollars for its replacement. This vessel was owned by a brand-new young entrant to the fishery who mortgaged all his life away to enter this fishery and this matter will likely be financially crippling for his fishing enterprise and his family. This could have been avoided had the East Pubnico wharf been properly funded and of appropriate size.

Another quick anecdote is of a trip I personally did to Newfoundland last summer. I happened upon a miniscule fishing wharf near Rocky Harbor. Coincidentally I began speaking to the local harbor authority rep who made a joke about receiving 4 million dollars of funding for a wharf who housed 1 fishing boat and 2 small pleasure boats. The wharf (as every other wharf I observed during my trip) was already in much better shape than the best of wharves we have in South West Nova Scotia. This gentleman joked that they had no idea what to do with 4 million dollars. His solution was possibly to build a small floating dock of about \$40 000 in case another pleasure craft ever wanted to tie there. Without a proper economic assessment, you can easily multiply our 1000 lobster licenses just off of Yarmouth with an average landing of 58 000lbs at an average price of 9\$ per pound. This equates to \$522 000 000 injected in to a region of 100km in length without counting LFAs 33 and 35 as well. It was mind boggling for me to see all these beautiful over funded wharves in Newfoundland with only a couple fishing boats when our primary economic driver constitutes of 2 million dollars vessels tied to insufficient piers.

We are asking for major emergency funding. We cannot operate much longer with small election time injections that fix issues we should have fixed 20 years ago. Our piers are falling down and they are too small. We need assistance for all wharves in South West Nova Scotia that house our last well managed fishery. We cannot keep competing against other local harbor

authorities for a piece of the small depleted small craft harbors pie. We are asking in solidarity with other ports for major projects to move forward.

Lucien LeBlanc

On Behalf of the Harbor Authorities of Wedgeport and Pinkney's Point