

**PRESENTATION TO THE COHEN COMMISSION AT  
NEW WESTMINSTER ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2010**

**Mr. Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen:**

**My name is Darrel McEachern of Maple Ridge, B.C. and I have been a Salmon Gilnetter on the Fraser River and throughout B.C. Coastal Waters for over 50 years. I am also a Herring Gillnet Fisherman.**

**Two weeks ago today we were harvesting sockeye salmon on the Fraser River just out front here of this meeting room. It was a wonderful sockeye run! A once in a lifetime, truly joyous experience for every fisherman. It has brought new hope and enthusiasm to the industry. It was badly needed and is greatly appreciated!**

**I am a Member of the Area E and D Gillnet Associations and of the Area E Harvest Committee. The following are also my personal views, not necessarily those of the Association's to which I belong.**

**I would reiterate the points made by Bob Rezansoff previously this evening.**

**The reason I am speaking to the Commission this evening is in regard to the fourth question noted in your Media Alert of August 4, 2010 which is "How can Fraser Sockeye be effectively harvested?"**

**The answer to that question in my respectful opinion is that the most effective way to harvest Fraser Sockeye and other species of salmon in B.C. is by way of individual, transferrable shares that is quotas**

allocated to each individual salmon licence. This is commonly referred to as the ITQ or “Individual Transferrable Quota Harvesting Method”.

I am sure that the Commission is familiar with what is commonly referred to as the “Pearce-McCrae Report of 2004 entitled, *Treaties in Transition: Towards a sustainable Fishery on the Canada’s Pacific Coast* 2004). The Pearce-McCrae Report recommended transferrable shares in the form of individual quotas. It has been partially, but not fully implemented, for salmon on our B.C. Coast. There have been further studies and reports after the Pearce-McCrae Report including one by the Watershed Watch Salmon Society by Terry Glavin in 2007 and the Score Report by the CSAB in 2008. Most of these studies have supported ITQ’s. I believe the DFO is in favour of the ITQ as a management tool, but it has not been fully implemented. At present, the Area F Northern Trollers have ITQ, the Area A Seines have a partial ITQ and the Area B Seines had ITQ for Fraser Sockeye in 2010. As well, the Area H Trollers operated with ITQ for the Gulf Sockeye Fishery in 2010. There was also a voluntary quota based fishery by Area B Seines in Barclay Sound in 2010.

Other B.C. fisheries are managed on an ITQ or transferrable share based method including ground fish, halibut and sable fish. The roe herring fishery is also based on transferrable shares and quotas with some modifications. These fisheries are generally sustainable and economically viable. With the exception of this immediately past year, the commercial sockeye fishery on the Fraser River has been uneconomic for many years.

**At the present time, the Johnstone Straits and the Fraser River Gillnetters do not have an ITQ Fishery for Fraser Sockeye or any other species and in my respectful view it would be better for the fish, better for management of the fishery by the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans and better for the fishermen if an ITQ harvesting regime was in place.**

**The advantages of an ITQ Fishery are well documented, including the following:**

- 1. ITQ permits management to accurate catch levels because it is based on the output control of the number of fish caught per licence or share. The current system is area and time managed with a pre-estimate of the catch which is predicted to occur during the set area and time. This is difficult and the numbers are often inaccurate. At times of low abundance, the current management regime can prevent an opening from occurring at all for fear of exceeding the TAC. In times of high abundance the entire TAC may not be realized (that is what happened this year).**
- 2. More accurate catch numbers gives greater control of the fishery to the managers which leads to better management.**
- 3. The fishermen can adapt to runs of small, medium and large size and tailor their costs to their quota. They can change their gear and methods of fishing to be the most effective and efficient.**

- 4. Individual fishing strategies can be modeled to match the share or shares that fishermen have. Shares can be traded or leased among individual gear types and as well can be leased or traded among other gear types. This trading of fishing privileges between gear types was possible in 2010 between the Area B Seines and the Area H Trollers.**
- 5. A share based fishery would provide the fisherman with the ability to transfer unused or uncatchable allocations to other users who could utilize those uncaught fish. For instance in 2010 the Area E did not catch approximately 500,000 Sockeye in the Fraser River and the Area D Gillnetters did not catch approximately 1,000,000 Sockeye of their allowable catch. This is 1,500,000 sockeye that will be on our spawning grounds in excess of the optimum excape ment. At \$5.00 per fish, this is a loss to the fishery and economy of B.C. of \$7,500,000.00. If the Area E and the Area D Salmon Gillnetters had had an ITQ management regime in 2010, they likely could have either caught those fish or made an arrangement to have other gear types catch those fish for them on a joint venture basis. For instance the Area B Seines could have caught the fish in the Johnstone Straits or the Gulf of Georgia. Also, the gillnetters could have traded their uncaught quota to other user groups, for instance the First Nations on a joint venture profit sharing basis.**

6. **An ITQ Fishery reduces the competition in the fishery which increases cooperation among fishermen and the DFO, and as well, increases safety of fishing workplace.**
7. **An ITQ Fishery is usually slower and easier to plan leading to better market prices.**

### **SUMMARY**

**At the present time the Salmon Gillnetters on the B.C. Coast are restrained by input controls: Currently, we have a competitive, derby style fishery based on area and time. This is not compatible with current conservative risk adverse management goals, including conservation units and the Wild Salmon Policy.**

**For many years the Salmon Gillnet Fishery has been uneconomic and unsustainable. An ITQ fishery would give the fishery the tools and flexibility to adapt to changes and to become responsibly managed, economically viable and sustainable.**

**The current Area and Time competitive, derby fishery is a relic of the past and should be abandoned and the ITQ transferrable share mechanism should be implemented coast wide for all salmon species.**

**Thank you,**

**Darrel McEachern**