



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

FOPO • NUMBER 045 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, March 22, 2007

—
Chair

Mr. Gerald Keddy

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•(1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we're meeting with the parliamentary delegation from Indonesia. Welcome to the chair of that delegation, Mr. Pasaribu.

On behalf of our committee members, I must say we're very interested in hearing what you have to say, and to have a full discussion here this morning. Unfortunately we have only an hour before our next presenters are here, but we're certainly happy to take that hour and discuss items of concern for both Canada and Indonesia.

Do we have interpretation? Am I talking too fast?

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Team Leader, Parliamentary Delegation from Indonesia, Commission IV (Agriculture, Forestry, Ocean, Fisheries and Food Products)) (Interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to apologize because we had a problem with our luggage with Air Canada from Toronto this morning. I'm very sorry about the not-so-polite clothes. I'm very sorry about that.

The Chair: It's not a problem.

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Mr. Chairman, first of all, we would like to express our thanks for your very nice welcome. It is our pleasure to be here in Canada. We come here not only to strengthen the friendship between the people of Canada and Indonesia, but also to present our Commission IV, dealing with the fisheries and oceans and to do a comparison study here. The comparison study that we hold today is related to our intention to initiate new bills concerning the coastal and marine area management and the ocean economic policy.

As you might have known, Indonesia is the largest archipelago country in the world. It consists of 17,504 islands and 81,000 kilometres of coastal borders. It is estimated that 60% of our Indonesian population of 220 million live in the coastal and marine areas. The coastal and marine areas, which are relatively narrow, have potential biological and non-biological natural resources, at environmental examination, that are important for the basic necessities of the inhabitants' lives and the basic capital for Indonesian national development.

But in the last decade there have been indications that the coastal and marine areas that are susceptible have been damaged by human

activities in exploiting the resources or by natural disasters like the tsunami. In addition to the accumulation of the partial exploitation in the coastal and marine areas, other activities in the upper course of the coastal areas have also caused damage to the coastal and marine resources.

On the other hand, awareness of the strategic areas of the coastal and marine areas management in sustainable and integrated works, as well as on the basis of the society, is relatively low. The facts indicate that the principles of management have not been integrated with the development activities in all sectors and areas. The management system of coastal and marine areas is still not able to eliminate the factors that cause damage and is still not able to give the biological resources the chance to recover naturally. These conditions can lead to the loss of the valuable resources and foreclose future options and benefits associated with the use of the resources. I believe that those kinds of problems have also happened in any country with coastal areas, including maybe Canada.

As we well know, Canada has the world's longest coastline, which is maybe about 243,000 kilometres. That is why we'd like to learn about your experiences, your laws, your management, your regulations on these issues.

Besides that, I'd like to inform you about and invite the House of Commons of Canada to set up a Canada–Indonesia bilateral parliamentary cooperation group. The purpose of the group is to work together for greater friendship and cooperation between parliamentarians of Canada and Indonesia, and thereby serve to foster better relations and mutual understanding between our respective parliaments and peoples represented therein. I join the group with 14 members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, who come from all factions. I hope for your acceptance of this idea for a better relationship between Indonesia and Canada.

•(1115)

Before I conclude my introductory remarks, allow me to introduce members of the delegation.

I am Pasaribu from the Golkar party. These are my friends Faqih Chaironi, Nurhadi Musyawir, Pak Hilman, Pak Djoemad, Pak Idham, Pak Wowo, and my friend Darwis. And of course, there are Pak Rusman and Pak Apri Hananto, and then of course, you know our friend from the Indonesian embassy, Pak Siringoringo. Then, of course, you know Trisari Paramita, our interpreter, from the Indonesian embassy.

Thank you very much again.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Certainly it's a privilege to have you here today for these bilateral discussions.

Perhaps before I turn it over to our first questioner, I'll introduce our group.

Members of Parliament on the government side include Mr. Blaine Calkins, Mr. James Lunney, and Mr. Randy Kamp; from the official opposition, the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay; from the Bloc Québécois, Mr. Raynald Blais and Mr. Gérard Asselin; and from the New Democratic Party, Mr. Peter Stoffer.

You can see we have an all-party committee here. Actually a majority of the committee members are from the opposition parties, so it makes for an interesting committee sometimes, but we pride ourselves on being a committee that is able to work on behalf of the fisheries straight across Canada. The majority of the time, quite frankly, we get along quite well—that's not all of the time, but the majority of the time.

We will allow for interpretation, but with no further ado, I will turn it over to Mr. MacAulay.

• (1120)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's a pleasure to have you here today. It would be interesting to hear some of.... How many million people did you indicate? Was it 400 million or 40 million living on the coastline of Indonesia? Pretty well everybody's on the coastline of Indonesia.

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): It's 60% of the 220 million people of Indonesia; 60% of them stay in the coastal areas and in the small islands.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, my figure was correct, then, Mr. Chairman.

What I would be interested in first is on your fisheries management and what you do have. Here we have the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We have fisheries officers, and there's always the problem with funding and making sure there's enough funding to do the job properly. I would like you to indicate to us what your situation is in protection.

You're talking about exploiting resources, losing resources, and management problems, I would take it. What kind of system do you have in place to protect your resources?

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Of course, that is why I'm here, to learn from you. In the Indonesian Parliament, our commission for dealing with the fisheries and oceans management is going to finish what they call a bill about the coastal area management and small islands.

We have many problems regarding what they call illegal fishing. We have many problems about pollution in the ocean and the coastal areas, especially in the Malacca Straits within Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. We don't have what maybe you have here, the coast guard. We have so many problems—economic exclusive zones to 100 kilometres. Beside that, we have many problems on how to control not only our coastal areas but the ocean in Indonesia.

Many people in Indonesia are very traditional fisherman. So there are big problems. That is why now our commission is going to finish what they call a bill of the coastal and marine areas management, to be enacted maybe next August.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: What you're telling me is that you have to have this act put in place, with proper regulations or laws. So are you telling me there's not proper enforcement or a proper framework in place to make sure that illegal fishing doesn't take place, not a proper framework in place to stop pollution?

Is there any problem when people are caught overfishing? Is there anybody to catch them overfishing? Is there a problem with polluters? And if you catch the polluters, what's done with the polluters? Are there laws in place, even if you do catch them, to deal with them?

• (1125)

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): With the recent big-bang reform we've had in Indonesia, we've changed the special management, and of course we've had to change many acts in Indonesia. With big-bang reform has come more and more decentralization, more autonomy for our provinces and counties, and then more democratization.

We have, of course, an act for this, a fisheries act; the problem is how to implement it. Enforcement is very difficult because of our long coastal area in Indonesia, the second longest after Canada. That is why we created the new laws, the oceans management bill and the other one, the coastal areas and small islands bill, which are still in Parliament, to be finished in perhaps two months' time.

The Chair: I'll make a quick comment, if I may, before I turn it back to Mr. MacAulay.

Our offshore is controlled by the federal government. It's not controlled by the provincial governments. We have in Canada a 200-mile limit. The controls within the 200-mile limit really are broken down in a couple of jurisdictions. The primary jurisdiction is Fisheries and Oceans. They set the TAC, the limit on the amount of fish you can catch. They do the fisheries science, and they do the enforcement part of that.

The other areas out there are coast guard and the military, or the Canadian navy. They deal with different issues. But on your issue of pollution, your issue of bilge water control, your issue of fisheries enforcement, the science and biology that's done on the oceans, that's done by Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I apologize. I guess I should have been talking more about what we do instead of what you do. But there are some examples from us that I wouldn't take, if I were you.

We didn't really handle the cod fishery too well here. Everybody likes to blame everybody else.

I think that when you look at the regulations, as the chairman rightly said, we have different departments watching different areas that are involved. For example, with the lobster fishery in our area—and it's a rich fishery for the fishermen—there are rules in place. We have Department of Fisheries and Oceans officials who patrol the area. If you were caught taking in something illegal, you probably would lose two weeks of fishing, which would be thousands and thousands of dollars. This is the kind of thing we do in order to try to preserve our stocks.

If you're interested, and I guess you are, it would be interesting to watch. We have Bill C-45 coming before the House of Commons. That is the new Fisheries Act. Everybody is not in 100% agreement with everything in that, and that will be an interesting display of democracy taking its role through Canada. And I think it's a good thing too; the government probably needs quite a bit of help getting this legislation straightened out. But that's what this committee is here for.

When we put new legislation in place, this is where it comes first, or supposedly does. Often what happens is that the legislation is introduced, and then, perhaps before second reading, the government allows it to come to committee to give the committee time to go across the country and talk to fisher people from coast to coast and to be sure that now they have the input. Sometimes it's after second reading, and that can be a difference of opinion. That's done so that you have the input of the industry.

Everybody is on the same wavelength in this country. We have to protect our resources.

•(1130)

The Chair: We have to allow her to interpret, Lawrence. I have to interrupt.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Did I say too much?

The Chair: She's good, but I don't know if she's that good.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I apologize. I'm sorry.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Monsieur Blais, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, everyone.

You can easily understand why the language I'm using is French.

First, I apologize, but I don't necessarily know the details of your situation. However, from what I understood, in view of the extent of your coastlines and the diversity of the fisheries as such, you will have to make some decisions in order to set your priorities. I imagine that, in Indonesia, as is the case here, money doesn't grow on trees and is not necessarily found on the rocks or in the water.

Will these priorities ultimately force you to sacrifice the traditional inshore fishery in favour of the so-called commercial or modern fishery? I get the impression we're making that sacrifice here as well, even though, in a way, our financial resources allocated to Fisheries and Oceans Canada are much greater than in your country. However,

I believe we are nevertheless making sacrifices whereby the inshore fisheries are unfortunately being sacrificed.

•(1135)

[English]

Ms. Trisari Paramita (Interpreter, Parliamentary Delegation from Indonesia, Commission IV (Agriculture, Forestry, Ocean, Fisheries and Food Products)): Maybe this question can be answered later for a more lively discussion. Can we save this question for later?

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: I didn't think my question was difficult. Pardon me if I made a mistake, but the idea is this: I get the impression that the extent of your coastlines forces you to set priorities, and priorities unfortunately mean sacrifices.

I believe we have the same situation in Canada. The extent of our coastlines and the financial means we have do not necessarily coincide 100% with needs. So choices unfortunately have to be made.

Furthermore, how are you managing to support the so-called traditional fishery? There is a lot of talk about shrimp and tuna, and about a diversified fishery in other sectors. What is your objective for the traditional fishery?

[English]

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): *Merci beaucoup.*

In Indonesia, the first priority now is what we call the revitalization of agriculture and fisheries. Why? Because there's a very big problem in Indonesia with poverty and with the unemployment rate. Poverty is extremely bad in Indonesia, with unemployment and underemployment.

Most of the fishermen, 60% of our population, stay in the coastal areas, in the small islands, and maybe 80% of them live in poverty. So the big problem now is how to reduce poverty, and the second one is how to reduce unemployment for the fishermen. This is our big priority, not the commercial fishing.

On the other hand, we have a big problem with illegal fishing. They come from Thailand, from China, from Korea, from Taiwan, or from Vietnam to the Indonesian ocean, and then there is a very big problem with illegal fishing. That is why the traditional fishermen of Indonesia are still below the poverty line. The first priority of the Indonesian government and of course of our standing committee, our commission, is how to reduce the poverty of the fishermen and how to reduce unemployment in the fishermen's area. It's the big problem.

The second one, of course, commercial fishing, is only the second priority, not the first priority. That is why we now give subsidies to the traditional fishermen. But for that we need new laws, a new act, to protect the coastal and small island areas, because we don't have enough laws for that.

We know that here in your country you have a Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, 1985, the Oceans Act, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Parks Canada Agency Act, the Coasting Trade Act—you have so many acts here. So that is why we would like to learn about your system, about your acts, about your regulations, about your management, about how you protect your coastal areas.

And of course the population has stayed in these areas. This is a big problem in Indonesia now. That is why we would like to learn about the system of Canada, how to protect not only the fishermen but also the ecosystem of the small islands and the coastal zones in Canada.

• (1140)

The Chair: Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to each and every one of you for coming to visit with us today to discuss issues of mutual concern on the fishery.

In Canada right now we have a discussion going on within the fishery of whether or not it should be a more private fishery in commercial hands, to be dictated by, for example, the department regarding resources and where it should go, or whether it should remain a common property resource, which means it is owned by the people of Canada, to be distributed in that sort of equitable manner. So that is the discussion that we're having now.

As you may or may not know, New Zealand and Iceland have moved to having private fisheries called ITQs, which are individual transferable quotas. That means that if the state gives an individual fisherman a quota, that individual could transfer that quota to somebody else and receive some remuneration for that.

That is a debate we're having in this country. Some countries have gone that way, and it's been quite successful. Others have said it hasn't been successful. So that's one of the considerations your government would have to take into effect and would have to study.

Also, the protection of fish habitat requires enforcement. How seriously do you want to add that enforcement? In Iceland they have 50-metre guns on top of their vessels to assure any fishing violators that they will be persuaded not to do that anymore, if I may put it that way. That is something to be taken into consideration. As well, there is the need to set up certain fragile ecosystems within Indonesian waters as no-fish zones, for fish habitats and for nursery grounds for the stocks, because they need a place to go to thrive without there being any attempt to catch them while they're in those areas. So a chain of marine protected areas would need to be established as well.

Those are just some of the concerns I think you would need to look at in that particular regard.

Go right ahead.

• (1145)

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Yes, thank you very much for that.

That's right. We'd like to see the text of the acts, and know how to implement and enforce the acts.

There are some problems. In Indonesia, we have an environmental protection act, but the big problem is how to implement it, how to enforce it. We don't have enough power to enforce the ecological protection act.

Of course, I thank you very much.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Unfortunately, I have to leave to go to the House, but I want to say it was an honour to have met you. Good luck in your deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I would like to say to our committee group, before I go to Mr. Kamp, that we will, through the chair and the clerk and our researcher, send you a copy of the Fisheries Act, Bill C-45, and the deliberations that will be going on around the act. We will also send you a letter outlining oceans-related legislation from Canada.

“Oceans-related” doesn't translate well.

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Thank you very much.

Mr. President, my colleague from Indonesia would like to ask some questions.

• (1150)

The Chair: Yes, of course.

Mr. Nurhadi M. Musyawir (Parliamentary Delegation from Indonesia, Commission IV (Agriculture, Forestry, Ocean, Fisheries and Food Products)) (Interpretation): There are four questions. Do you want me to do them one by one or do you want all the questions?

The Chair: Please ask them one at a time.

Mr. Nurhadi M. Musyawir (Interpretation): All right.

One, has Canada's law regulating the oceans and the fisheries all this time been effective in implementation?

The Chair: I'm going to turn this over to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I think it was my turn anyway.

As Mr. Pasaribu has mentioned, we have a number of different statutes that affect our fisheries industries and resources. The primary one is our Fisheries Act. It was passed in 1868, 139 years ago. It's the legislation we're trying to modernize through Bill C-45, which was mentioned. Bill C-45 will repeal and replace the old Fisheries Act with a new Fisheries Act. The Fisheries Act that we have has worked quite well over the time we've been a country, although it needs some changes,

I think we could probably have a debate in this group on how effective our enforcement has been. We try hard to enforce the laws and regulations that govern fisheries. I think in general we do a fairly good job, but enforcement costs money. We need fisheries officers, habitat inspectors, and all of those. We probably don't have as much money as we wish we had to be able to enforce it properly.

That's part of the answer.

The Chair: The only thing I would add to that—and I'll try to be concise—is that I think, and I think our membership would agree, that enforcement against foreign overfishing, which is a problem in Indonesia, has been very good in Canada. We arrest boats that come inside the 200-mile limit, we force them to go to court, and we seize their catch.

Many of our enforcement difficulties have been within our own fleet—that's enforcement of overfishing by our own fishermen inside the 200-mile limit. It's a big job to make sure that everyone abides by the rules and regulations.

Mr. Randy Kamp: I have a question.

When you were talking about illegal fishing, Mr. Pasaribu, were you talking about foreign vessels coming into your economic zone within the 200-mile limit, or outside?

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Yes. They are in the space, in an exclusive economic region. There are so many illegalities, even in what they call it, in their...

Mr. Randy Kamp: Do you mean illegal fishing by foreign vessels?

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Yes, they are from Thailand, Vietnam, and China. It's a big problem.

• (1155)

The Chair: I wanted to explain, and I don't want to give you too much to interpret. I'm going to try to be more brief with my wrap-up comment.

We only brought in our 200-mile limit in 1977. Prior to 1977, it was a 12-mile limit. Literally, on the coast of Nova Scotia, where I come from on Canada's east coast, you could see Spanish trawlers, Cuban trawlers, all the countries in the European Union, the British, the Irish, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Icelanders, the Danes, the Swedes, and the Norwegians. They were all fishing there. After 1977, we had an exclusive economic zone out to the 200-mile limit, and we had the capability to arrest anyone inside the 200-mile limit.

Mr. Calkins would like to make a quick comment on that point.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): If I could just add to this, it's very important that you be able to observe your economic zone. We have ships that can arrest and detain, and that's been pointed out, but we don't do a lot of patrolling with them. We actually patrol from the sky. We see what's going on from the air, and then we send out the ships. Otherwise, you would need so many ships. I think that's an important component as well.

The Chair: Do you want to try your second question? We're running short of time here, and we have another group, but we will take another 10 minutes to wrap up. So we'll take your other question.

We'll try to keep our answers shorter.

Mr. Nurhadi M. Musyawir (Interpretation): For my second question, is there any regulation given to law institutions or to traditional society regulating the rights to manage the coastal area?

Mr. Randy Kamp: I think the general answer is that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has the responsibility of managing the coastal fisheries. There is some cooperation and co-management with various groups, but it wouldn't be accurate to say

that traditional groups or aboriginal groups are responsible for the management of fisheries. They get involved in it and co-manage it in some respects, but enforcement falls to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Chair: Maybe just as a brief add-on, I would point out there are coastal zones. So the province of Nova Scotia has a certain territory in which Nova Scotian fishermen fish. That's described under licences. New Brunswick has another area; Quebec has another area; and British Columbia, on another coast, has another area.

We will send you a map of the way the fishing zones are broken up.

We'll try the next question here.

• (1200)

Mr. Nurhadi M. Musyawir (Interpretation): Is there ever any conflict between the U.S. and Canada regarding the management of the coastal area? How do you give protection to Canadian citizens who are caught in the act of overfishing in another region or to a foreigner who gets caught overfishing in the Canadian region?

Thank you.

The Chair: On the east coast of Canada, most of the ocean border between Canada and the United States is defined. We don't fish across that line. Georges Bank has been very clearly defined. There is another area in the Gulf of Maine that is not as clearly defined, and there are still jurisdictions claimed by the United States and by Canada; there's a bit of a no man's land, if you will, there.

I will turn to Mr. Kamp to describe the salmon fishery agreement on the west coast in British Columbia.

Mr. Randy Kamp: The question you raise is a good one.

It's a very big challenge, because on the west coast of Canada, we have several species of salmon. It's a migratory species. They spawn in the rivers and lakes of British Columbia and Alaska, for example, and then they go into the ocean and up to the north Pacific. When they're ready to spawn again, they come back. Of course, they pass through Canadian waters, and some try to spawn in streams of the United States.

We have a fairly complex treaty with the United States, called the Pacific Salmon Treaty. It's actually going to expire and needs to be renewed.

During the 1980s, we had what was called the salmon wars. We had no agreement on who should catch the fish, how many Canadians could catch and how many the Americans could catch. We do it better now.

But on the other question about what assistance we might offer to a Canadian who is charged by an American authority for illegal fishing, I don't know if we provide any assistance in that regard. I don't know of it happening, but it might.

Perhaps the department could answer that one for you.

•(1205)

The Chair: If we have time, we'll hear your last question, and then we have to move on to our next delegation.

Mr. Nurhadi M. Musyawir (Interpretation): The other question is in regard to the environment. What is the Government of Canada's policy for protecting the environment from man-made pollution or natural disasters?

Thank you.

The Chair: I'll give a quick answer to that.

We have very good environmental controls and an enforcement process in place for bilge dumping, the loss of petroleum products, diesel, or anything like that being dumped over the side. We're still working on doing a better job with ballast water control. It's all part of the new Fisheries Act, which would give us more tools in our tool box for enforcement on issues like ballast water and invasive species.

There are other environmental issues that concern a different department instead of Fisheries and Oceans. It's really the responsibility of the Department of the Environment when you have pollution from larger cities and towns going into the ocean—raw sewage—and similar issues that we're working on to try to remediate. It's a work in progress.

The Chair: In closing, Mr. Pasaribu and the Indonesian delegation, again we appreciate the opportunity to talk to you today. I apologize that we didn't have more time for more questions. We will send you lots of information about how the fishery is controlled in Canada.

The one thought I would leave with you is the fact that in Canada we look at the fishery as a common property resource; it belongs to all Canadians. Fishermen are all licensed fishermen, but any Canadian who takes the proper courses can enter the fishery if they buy a licence and a boat.

Your question earlier was about TAC, or total allowable catch. When the TAC for various species is divided up, there are things that apply, such as the traditional fishermen who would have caught that fish and who would have been fishing in that fishery, and adjacency—how close they are to the resource—but I'm going to say that there are really no exclusive fisheries. You can get into the fishery if you buy a licence in that fishery. Lots of fisheries are controlled by certain groups, but it is still a common property resource. That's hard to explain.

•(1210)

Dr. Bomer Pasaribu (Interpretation): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Indonesian delegates of Parliament, again I want to thank you for the nice meeting here in Canada. Your country is very nice, of course, but very cold for Indonesian people.

Again, we're very sorry about our clothes and our problem with our luggage.

Thank you very much. See you in Indonesia—not only in Ottawa, but in Jakarta. Please come to Jakarta and we'll have a discussion in Jakarta. Thank you very much again.

The Chair: Thank you very much. *Merci beaucoup.*

We're going to suspend for about two minutes to allow us to move our chairs around and allow us time to say goodbye to our guests.

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_____ (Pause) _____

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•(1215)

The Chair: I'll call our meeting back to order. Welcome.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are undertaking a study of small craft harbours. Welcome to our witnesses from the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee: Mr. Osborne Burke, chairperson; Mr. Bob Baziuk; and Mr. Luc LeGresley.

Just before we hear our witnesses—I know there will be some questions on funding here—I'm going to ask Mr. Kamp to explain the recent changes to the funding arrangement.

Very briefly, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know all of you are probably scouring the budget documents to see if there was any additional money for small craft harbours. You won't have found it in there, but I wanted to make sure the committee knew that the \$20 million of funding that was due to sunset has now been extended and in fact put into A-base funding, which means it's permanent. In addition, there is about \$8 million of transformational funding permanently in small craft harbours as well.

That may not be everything we wanted, but I think it's at least good news to know that the \$20 million is now part of the predictable financial framework from year to year.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Osborne Burke (Chairperson, National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the committee members. On behalf of all the harbour authorities and their volunteers across Canada, as well as my colleagues who are here with me today, I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee for giving us an opportunity to make our presentation. In particular, honourable mention goes to Miriam as well, because there have been many e-mails and phone calls back and forth.

So thank you. It's much appreciated.

The Chair: She does a great job.

Mr. Osborne Burke: Yes, she does.

My name is Osborne Burke. I am the chair of the national HAAC and I am from Nova Scotia. Sitting with me is Bob Baziuk, who is from British Columbia and is our secretary; and Luc LeGresley, who is from Quebec region, and he's the vice-chair of the national HAAC.

I'm going to start off the presentation today.

In our presentation, we are going to provide a brief overview, from a volunteer perspective, of the harbour authority program, the challenges we face as volunteers, and how we try to work together with the small craft harbours program of Fisheries and Oceans to maintain and operate these harbours. One point we certainly want to stress from the beginning is the collaborative relationship we have with Fisheries and Oceans' small craft harbours branch, and that the issues we're presenting today are not so much with the program itself but with the level of funding.

Before I continue any further, I'd like to take a moment as well to thank the committee for their efforts to date, because you have made many over the years to increase awareness of the issues and challenges facing the small craft harbours program and highlighting to government the need to increase the program's budget.

One particular comment I would make at this time, before I pass it on to my colleague Bob to carry on part of the presentation, is that I'm pleased to hear that the \$20 million is going to continue, from what has just been mentioned here today. I'd also like to stress that this \$20 million really doesn't change anything; it has been there for five years. It's much appreciated that it's now part of the A-base or permanent funding; however, it still leaves us a shortfall on an annual basis of \$35 million, which is barely enough to maintain the facilities we have.

On that note, now I'll pass it over to my colleague Bob. Thank you.

●(1220)

Mr. Bob Baziuk (Secretary, British Columbia, National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee): Thanks very much, Osborne.

Once again, gentlemen, thanks very much for your time this morning.

If you would refer to slide four, it's basically the composition and the objectives of the NHAAC. I know some of you are wondering what an NHAAC is. I did when I started. It's the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee. To summarize, it's a group of people, volunteers from across the land, who come through their regions to the national forum to provide information on small craft harbours and how we can better the program, and to find success stories and share them for the overall betterment of the Canadian fisheries in the harbours in general.

We're here as the elected board that meets from that national body. Today I would not want you to look at us as three individuals. I want you to look at us as 5,000 pairs of eyes of the volunteers—and I stress the word “volunteers”—who run these harbours across this land. I must say, personally, it's an honour to represent each and every one of them.

I refer you to page five. Osborne touched on this, and I want to reiterate his comments about the positive relationship that we have with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans small craft harbours. It's had its growing pains, but I'm sure all of you are pleased to hear that we work with them very well. There's transparency, there's trust. It's a win-win for everybody. I know they have the passion as well to keep these harbours going. Working with a regional and head-quarters staff has been absolutely nothing short of fantastic these

days. I think that's evident when we came up with our theme: creating the future together.

Slide six is simply an overview, and I won't spend a lot of time on it, because we are here on behalf of the volunteers. It points out the importance of the Canadian commercial fishery in an economic context of the whole Canadian economy. The one part of this slide that I'd like to point out is that small craft harbours' facilities are often the only visible federal presence in some remote communities, or the only public access to waterways. To me that should be key, as I'm sure it is to everybody in this room.

I refer you to slide seven. This slide simply points out the history of the harbour authority program. It started in 1987, and it points out, through the bullet form, how the program came to be. Note that the day-to-day operations of these harbours all across Canada are now the responsibility of the harbour authorities. I will make a note that the harbour authorities do charge for services to the best of their abilities, or to the best that the condition of their harbours will allow.

Slide eight is an overview of how many harbour authorities there are versus how many harbours there are. It's evident, if you do the math, that there are a lot of harbour authorities managing more than one harbour, and I myself do that. That comes with its challenges, but just to point out the extension to the volunteers, sometimes managing two harbours can be quite a challenge.

Luc and I both used to have hair, right, Luc? Mine has diminished over the years, but it's all worth it.

It also points out that in smaller harbours, the activities are conducted by the volunteer members or by the board of directors. In the larger harbours we have a sufficient revenue base, where we can hire managers and what have you. But for the most part they don't.

The previous slide pointed out the harbour authority day-to-day operations. Slide nine points out the responsibilities of small craft harbours and DFO. They retain the responsibility for the overall physical condition of the harbours, especially with respect to major capital repairs. I will also point out that it's not just wharves and floats, gentlemen, it's dredging, and that is all across the land, from my region at one coast to the other end of the country. Dredging is huge. You could have the prettiest harbours in the world, but if you can't get to them, how in the world...? We're dysfunctional when it comes to that aspect of it.

●(1225)

I don't want to come across as an antagonist, by any means. I want to come here and share a success story of working with Fisheries and Oceans staff, who are doing their part, but I certainly do want to make a point about the funding. I appreciate the announcement that was made this morning. We were not aware of that. But by the same token, it's still, in our eyes, not sufficient to properly sustain the program as a whole—every aspect of it.

With that, I will pass the presentation on to Luc.

Mr. Luc LeGresley (Vice-Chair, Quebec, National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee): I'm going to be doing my presentation in French.

[*Translation*]

The Harbour Authority Program is now 19 years old, and it has become the cornerstone of service delivery for small craft harbours. You can take it for granted that the harbour authorities are mainly the eyes of the Small Craft Harbours Program within a fishing harbour and that everything that happens is reported to Fisheries and Oceans.

The contribution by volunteers is very significant. There are currently more than 5,000 volunteers working in fishing harbours in Canada. Harbour authority revenues total approximately \$11 million annually. The volunteer effort approximates 135,000 hours a year, which corresponds to about 70 full-time people. In addition, harbour authorities engage approximately 125 full-time staff. When you combine the two, you see that harbour authorities provide approximately \$25.5 million a year in time and money in the context of the Small Craft Harbours Program.

If the harbour authorities did not exist, taxpayers across Canada would have to find a way to pay \$25.5 million more every year to satisfy fishing harbour users. Consequently, the contribution of all administrators and members of harbour authorities cannot be neglected.

We of the harbour authorities are proud of our harbours and of providing a high-quality service. People consider this a challenge. It is a good challenge for them to be able to tell the people of the community that they are taking care of fishing harbours and that they are proud of that. However, their pride stops when they see the state of the fishing harbours. Volunteers are experiencing frustration. They are physically and morally affected by the present situation. You have to understand that most volunteers are retirees. These are former fishermen, many of whom are over the age of 65. They have given a lot to their community, and when they see their fishing harbour deteriorate from year to year for lack of funding, they become discouraged. All harbour authorities agree that the present budget is inadequate for small craft harbours. You need only go into the field to see the state of disrepair of current facilities.

It must also be understood that the day-to-day management of fishing harbours is becoming more complex. From year to year, we have increasing government, but especially environmental obligations. There is also the risk associated with the management of fishing harbours, which every volunteer must bear. That isn't easy.

It must also be understood that a lot of volunteers have been involved with a harbour authority from the outset, for 19 years. These people would like to be able to ask someone else to take over, to replace them, because they are tired. At the national level, it is hard to recruit new volunteers. The people who seem interested in becoming members of a harbour authority are often frustrated when they see the responsibilities of management, the state of facilities and the reactions of users, who are even more frustrated than we are. It isn't always easy to find yourself in a fishing harbour and to be told by a member of your family, a fisherman or a friend that the harbour is in a lamentable state and to be asked if there's a way to do something. You have to deal with the arrogance of fishing harbour users.

It has to be acknowledged that the people of the Small Craft Harbours Program have listened and responded to certain requests by the harbour authorities, but their willingness has been constrained by a lack of funding. We know very well that the Small Craft Harbours Program people would like to do more, but that that is currently impossible. We're trying to find a way to save a dollar, and that's not always easy.

For example, I will tell you that the Small Craft Harbours Program currently provides \$500,000 annually to deal with fatigue within harbour authorities, which represents \$100,000 per region. I can tell you that that \$100,000 is very well spent to assist the harbour authorities in day-to-day management.

• (1230)

In addition, the Small Craft Harbours Program includes a civil liability insurance program for administrators and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. If, for one reason or another, Fisheries and Oceans Canada did not have to buy these insurance policies and thus protect 5,000 volunteers or more who work for the fishing harbours, I wouldn't be here today talking to you. No one would respond to you in the fishing harbours; you'd have to speak directly to the Small Craft Harbours Program. These volunteers clearly cannot injure themselves in a fishing harbour and not be insured; that's unthinkable.

In closing, it is interesting that the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee and the Small Craft Harbours Program worked jointly to prepare a brochure to promote the Harbour Authority Program. I don't know whether you have received it, but it will be distributed to you. It provides an explanation of the Harbour Authority Program. It's one way to promote the harbour authorities.

Having said that, I'm going to turn the floor over to my colleague Osborne. Before closing, I should tell you that we are nevertheless pleased to hear that the annual \$20 million amount should remain. In spite of that, if we went to see the people in the field and tell them that we have \$20 million more, their answer would be that there was a budget for 2005-2006 or 2006-2007 and that, even if that amount was maintained, there would still be financial problems. They will continue until additional money is invested in the small craft harbours.

Having said that, I thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Osborne Burke: Thank you, Luc.

I'll continue with slide 14, looking at challenges to the harbour authority program. As Luc and my colleague Bob as well have stated, there are volunteers out there who are trying to do their best. They're doing their part and trying to do it to the best of their abilities.

In the harbour authority program, though, we're facing budget issues, and these impact upon the integrity of the program. We need additional funding not only to maintain the commercial fishing harbours; as we said, dredging is a major issue in all regions, from the west coast to the east coast.

Some of the harbours that formed harbour authorities have not seen any major repairs or improvements to their harbours for many years. We firmly believe Fisheries and Oceans' small craft harbours program is doing its part. It's making representations. We're well aware it's been to this committee before, making arguments and representations on additional dollars.

Although small craft harbours program invests in many of the harbours, its current budget is seriously deficient. As I said, some harbours are seeing minimal investment. It's tough for the volunteers to get individuals to go out to collect fees. Imagine yourself on the wharf trying to collect fees, and the first thing in your face is the fisherman saying: "What about this? This is falling apart. I've not seen any improvement in a year, or five years." It's frustrating. There are barricades, where they can't go onto the wharves.

We're seriously concerned with this and that there was no funding re-announced in the budget. Irrespective of the \$20 million, everybody was expecting to see something in the budget above and beyond it. Even with the \$20 million, as we said, if you add in \$35 million additional money, which makes an approximate number that's been quoted to us of \$55 million annually, that's just to keep our heads above water, so to speak.

I'll turn to slide 15. The small craft harbours program's mandate was narrowed in 1995, and all recreational harbours were to be divested. There is no dedicated budget to deal with divestiture. There's \$1.5 million being diverted from the existing budget to try to deal with regular maintenance on these recreational facilities.

These facilities are continuing to deteriorate. The costs are going to increase as time goes on, compromising the safety of the users or access. It's a major priority of this National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee that something has to be done to address the issue of divestiture of recreational harbours.

When we talk about that, we're talking about additional dollars above and beyond the \$55 million. The \$55 million is to maintain the commercial fishing harbours we have. Divestiture involves a separate number of dollars. Something has to be done to address it. If we're getting out of recreational harbours, then let's put some dollars there and move on with it.

I turn to slide 16 now. As we've said previously and said many times during this presentation, we're confident that Fisheries and Oceans' small craft harbours branch is doing its best to support the program. Funding, funding, funding keeps coming back. It comes back from us, and we're hearing it from the volunteers, right out to the wharf.

The standing committee has certainly demonstrated its support and interest. There was a debate initiated last June. There was a vote in the House for \$35 million to be added to the budget. It was a unanimous vote; everybody in all parties supported it.

When the budget came out, there was a real expectation from the volunteers across Canada. With unanimous support on the vote, they fully expected to see something greater than the \$20 million we've heard about this morning. As you can appreciate, when we prepared our presentation, we weren't aware of any dollars.

It will still be perceived to some degree that we're being abandoned here. Yes, the \$20 million is great, but we need more dollars. There's a frustration level, and we have to deal with it on a day-to-day basis. Put yourselves in our shoes, as the national representatives of the volunteers, going back out on the wharves to address that and deal with these individuals and answer those questions.

It's a program that I think everybody among the volunteers is quite passionate about and supportive of. It's probably, I'd say, the best example in Canada of a volunteer program, and we don't want to lose it. We don't want the volunteers getting as frustrated as I sound now and saying "Here are the keys" and walking away from it. We don't want to see that happen.

In closing, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to make the presentation. We'd be pleased to answer any questions we can as well as we can with our limited abilities and what information we have.

● (1235)

I don't know if there are any closing remarks from either of my colleagues.

Mr. Bob Baziuk: No. I have just a simple thank you for hearing us, on behalf of all of our volunteers across the land.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate your coming here today.

As you are well aware, this committee has been a very strong supporter of small craft harbours over the years. Monsieur Blais has built his entire reputation on small craft harbours here, and Mr. MacAulay and all of us, quite frankly, have been good supporters.

We also deal with larger issues. There are the issues that relate to dedicated wharves and the small craft harbours wharves, including the ones that have been divested, and the whole issue with recreational wharves, as you've mentioned. There is a myriad of issues that we're all dealing with, and we're all dealing with budgets from this government and from the former government. But I can assure you that from this committee there is certainly a willingness and a want to continue to work on the small craft harbours program and to continue to improve it.

Go ahead, Mr. MacAulay.

● (1240)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much for what you do. Thank you for coming here. Thank you for presenting the problems you have, which are many, on behalf of people who are not getting paid to do it. It's a big task.

Could I ask Mr. Kamp one question, first, on what you indicated? Is the budget now the same as it was last year?

Mr. Randy Kamp: It would be approximately the same.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Yes. I just wanted to get that.

There are a lot of questions I could ask you, but you indicated that there was approximately between \$25 million and \$30 million of volunteer labour put into this issue. That itself would go a long piece to solving a lot of the problems, wouldn't it?

Mr. Osborne Burke: Yes, it certainly would, and that, for the choice of a word, is a conservative estimate.

A lot of hours go in there. There are a number of volunteers, and that's the best reasonable estimate of what's put out that we can come up with. We'd be very pleased to see another \$25 million, but \$35 million would be preferred, over and above the \$20 million.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Right.

Now, did you meet with the minister yesterday?

Mr. Osborne Burke: No, sorry, I did not meet with the minister.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I thought you were briefed by the department yesterday, but that's not the case.

Mr. Osborne Burke: No.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: You were never informed about the \$20 million until you heard it here this morning?

Mr. Osborne Burke: No. It was an absolute shock. As we said, the \$20 million is much appreciated, and we are pleased, very pleased, that at least it is there now on a permanent basis.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I don't want to criticize anybody, but I think it's a bit of a shame, looking at what you do and how important that is to what you're trying to do.

I'd like you to elaborate a bit. You indicated that small craft harbours and the harbour authorities are, in many areas, the only federal presence in the area and the only access to the waters. There are a lot of extra problems as we go down the road. A dollar today is not worth what it was yesterday, and certainly not what it was five years ago, when the \$20 million per year for \$100 million was put in place.

Could you elaborate a bit on the environmental aspect, or anything else that probably wasn't as big an issue five years ago but that would add to the cost?

Mr. Osborne Burke: I'll probably defer over to my colleague Bob as well. But when we first started with the harbour authority program, harbour authorities did a limited number of activities. Since the inception of the program, what we're looking at 20 years later has certainly got quite more detailed. Next year will be the 20th year.

Bob, do you want to add something?

Mr. Bob Baziuk: I wouldn't know where to start with that.

Steveston Harbour, where I come from, is the biggest harbour in Canada. With that come a multitude of things. There is environmental cleanup; there's the provision of services for environmental recycling; there are a lot of things like that.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I might add that you have to incur that cost. As these extra costs come into play, isn't your harbour authority expected to continue to provide the service with the same number of dollars?

Mr. Bob Baziuk: That's correct, sir.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: That's what I need to know—what the extra is.

Mr. Bob Baziuk: Yes.

Mr. Luc LeGresley: If I may answer you also, just for your information, I have two wharves in my municipality in the Gaspé area, and one of them is to be divested. Five years ago the value to divest was about \$500,000, but now it's up to close to \$1 million.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: The third party liability was a big issue, if you'd like to elaborate on that. I know there's a number of wharves in my area that certainly need more dollars in order to keep them in shape.

I remember when the concern we had was that we had fish plants on the wharf and we were scared they were going to go into the run or into the sea. We don't want to get back to that point, but you need dollars to be able to repair the wharves. The third party liability is a big issue.

Mr. Osborne Burke: In relation to the third party liability, it was an issue for the volunteers. Going back to the year 2000, roughly when the national HAAC started, it was one of the major concerns at the time, because the industry, as volunteers, were saying they were federal assets and the federal government should be responsible for third party liability insurance. We kept making our representations and message to government, and they did listen. The cost of the third party liability insurance is now covered by Fisheries and Oceans' small craft harbours branch, and it's a load off the volunteers' shoulders in relation to that. As you can appreciate, you're down there as volunteers, and if somebody gets injured, there are lawsuits, liability, and it's a stressful item for the volunteer to be bothered by worrying about it all the time.

In addition to that, the secondary part, which I believe Luc presented and he can speak to, is the directors' and officers' liability, which was the next step, and personal liability or bodily injury. Luc can speak to that, as to what activities we're undertaking nationally with small craft harbours branch to deal with that. It was the most recent concern, from an insurance point of view, for volunteers across Canada.

● (1245)

Mr. Luc LeGresley: The two last insurances he was talking about were put in place in November 2006. We also have to put in 25% in order to have it. DFO has made a contribution of 75% and we have to do one. It costs the harbour about \$28,000 per year to have those two last insurances.

I have to say that this was a big issue for all harbours across Canada, because people wanted to be insured and protected from all the risks they were taking by managing a wharf.

Mr. Osborne Burke: If I may add to that, as a snapshot example, for a harbour authority that was paying \$4,000 out of the operating funds—which they couldn't put back into the wharf facilities—to pay for directors' and officers' liability insurance, it was reduced overnight to a \$100 contribution. That's a significant savings and a stress load off the volunteers. Hopefully, as the year pans out, we'll have 100% participation from all the harbour authorities, where they'll all have coverage for the directors' and officers' liability and personal bodily injury.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Of course, a big concern in our area is that if there are not extra dollars, there will have to be extra fees charged. And talking about dredging, it's an environmental issue every time we go to dredge, and rightly so, but this is also adding extra costs. Where do we go or what do we do with the same amount of dollars when every year it costs more? And beyond that, it's a safety issue too. If you don't have the dredging done and there's a storm on and they can't get in the run, fishermen will die.

If you wish to, elaborate on this.

Mr. Osborne Burke: You particularly point out dredging. For dredge spoils, there are a lot of environmental regulatory requirements as to where you can dispose of them, and it adds to the cost. Habitat adds to the cost. It comes back to this \$55 million annually that is required to deal with just maintaining those facilities, but there are the other costs creeping in and increasing all the time.

If you were to go back five years ago, you would see that the detail in trying to do an environmental assessment is certainly significantly greater now than it was previously. Those costs are creeping in all the time. They are a major concern and they have to be addressed. As I say, \$55 million just patches up or repairs what we have, and as we're doing that, these other costs are coming on stream and they have to be addressed.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: What do you see then? As a committee, this committee did all it could do, but if the level of funding stays where it is, what's going to happen? Are fishermen going to have to pay more fees in order to have wharves? This is a big issue in my area.

Mr. Osborne Burke: I'll defer to both my colleagues to make a comment. But as far as fees go, harbour authorities, as we said, are doing their part. It's not just about fees. They're looking wherever they can to raise other dollars to assist, such as reducing the insurance costs. I don't think there are fishermen out there who are opposed to trying to contribute more—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I agree.

Mr. Osborne Burke: Long-term planning to look at your wharf, to see where you're going to be in five years.... We're collecting fees now, but it's not enough. We're going to have to do a combination of things. And they don't mind contributing if, on the other hand, they see their partner, the federal government, putting in the dollars to assist with the hard assets.

But I'll defer—

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: But that is the concern, because if the other partner is not putting in the proper funding, then there's only one other funder in place, and that happens to be the fisherman.

Mr. Bob Baziuk: That's why we're here today.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc LeGresley: If I may, I'd like to make a very important comment. I'm going to give you an example concerning the Magdalen Islands. Approximately five years ago, the municipalities paid for electricity. They paid dividends and managed virtually everything. The municipality provided a lot of services. Then budget cuts were made, at both the federal and provincial levels, and that affected the municipalities. The Magdalen Islands had to force the nine fishing harbours to pay all electricity costs.

In addition, this year, for 2007 especially, one of the bigger challenges the fishing harbours must face is to find a way to dispose of waste. Today, a fishing harbour must pay approximately \$20,000 a year. That means it has to find \$20,000 more from users. To be able to reduce that cost from \$20,000 to \$12,000, we had to buy a waste compactor. That machine is worth approximately \$50,000.

Let's consider the obligations of all users, of all harbour authorities. The federal government has to intervene financially. How do you think we can ask the taxpayers of the Magdalen Islands or North Shore...

In addition, in the southern part of the Gaspé Peninsula and Prince Edward Island, fishermen's incomes are quite low. Some fishermen earn approximately \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year. How do you think we can ask them to contribute more, financially speaking, to harbour facilities as a whole? I think that's impossible. Some fishermen are able to pay, but I don't think we can ask them to do it directly; that's ridiculous.

• (1250)

[English]

The Chair: We appreciate that.

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I imagine you'll continue to be generous with the time that is allotted to us.

First, I am very much interested in the small craft harbours issue for various reasons, and I think your presentation today provides me with another one. Without going back over what I've previously said on the subject, I would like to cite a comment by Mr. Asselin that I've used in certain speeches. In fact, one wonders whether the dock is attached to the boat or the boat is attached to the dock. This kind of situation is terrible and ridiculous. I've said it on a number of occasions, and I will continue to say it.

Now you add another dimension to this issue when you talk about the 5,000 volunteers in Canada who give their time and, ultimately, money. You clearly mentioned that the department did not have to provide approximately \$25 million because your work makes it possible to get that money.

Unfortunately, the government makes it so that these volunteers, who are concerned about the small craft harbours issue, are frustrated and exhausted, and when people are frustrated and exhausted, they may give up. If they feel abandoned, they will have no choice but to abandon as well. In my view, we have now reached that point.

I know very well that the committee will continue its work, and I'm going to ensure that we keep up the pressure with regard to this morning's improvisation concerning the \$20 million—I call that improvisation. You were here at the meeting yesterday, and the people from the department knew it. You were the main people concerned by the small craft harbours issue and you were stunned, as I was, to learn that nothing was provided for in the budget with regard to the \$20 million. This morning, in an improvised manner, we learned that—I want to check this first—the \$20 million will probably stay in the budget. You can never be too vigilant.

I'd like to hear your comments on this acute frustration. I recently spoke to a harbour authority chair, and he feels, as you said earlier, very bad about his fishermen colleagues who wound up blaming him because the department doesn't provide him with enough money to address the needs of his harbour authority.

I get the impression that, in Quebec, the elastic has snapped among volunteers, and the harbour authority people have criticized the situation at a press conference. We shouldn't go through that anymore.

I'd like to hear your comments on this aspect that we can characterize as new, because it's not because we didn't know it. However, I think it's important to examine the situation in this way; that is to say that, as regards the harbour authorities and the small craft harbours issue, there are some parliamentarians, fishermen and communities that are frustrated, but there are also volunteers who are increasingly frustrated and who may well give up.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Bob Baziuk: I will point out that, as you've just said regarding the frustrations of many people express, it's these volunteers who are at the front line. We're the ones, as Osborne suggested, on that dock having to listen to the same rhetoric of the same complaints, and what can we do?

I was going to go further and expand upon what the last person asked.

The Chair: Keep it brief, please, because I know Mr. Blais will have another question.

Mr. Bob Baziuk: Okay. I just want to point out that the management of these harbours is under a lease, and the lease clearly stipulates what the Crown is responsible for and what the harbour authority is responsible for. We're doing our part for the day-to-day things. We're asking where the rest is, where that commitment is, if I may put it thus.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: We've been criticizing this for a number of years now. Will we have to sue the department on the basis that it is not carrying out its mandate and that, consequently, there is a danger? You talk about the frustration of volunteers, but I'd also like you to tell me about safety. We talk about that a lot because the department eventually announces its ultimate decision, that, when things go poorly on the dock, they put up a fence. That's the response, as a result of which, ultimately nothing changes. Ultimately, safety becomes a pretext for doing nothing. I imagine that also adds to your frustration.

[English]

Mr. Osborne Burke: Putting up the fence or the barricade is a temporary stopgap measure to keep people, I guess, from injuring themselves. If the wharf is deteriorating to the point that it has to be barricaded, the temporary solution is to put the barricade up, but there has to be a longer-term solution found.

You mentioned legal action. I don't think I would see it getting to that point. What I see is a really good program and a number of volunteers whose frustration level is to the point of wondering why they should do this any longer, why they should put up with this, if they're not seeing the dollars invested back into the program.

Talking about these dollars, I remind everybody again that this money doesn't allow for doing anything where we have overcrowding at harbours and where we need to put new investment in. We're talking about just maintaining what we have. To avoid the barricades and to avoid the wharves being closed, we need that \$55 million on an annual basis to at least maintain what we have. Above and beyond that, whether for divestiture or new expansion, a separate pot of money has to be addressed.

So frustration is there, and we don't want to see the volunteers—because they do have a lease—saying, “To hell with it; I'm going to walk away”, and everybody suffering. You have to appreciate that in a lot of these communities—it's no different in my situation—even if you go on ten volunteer groups, you probably see the same faces, and they're getting tired.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc LeGresley: We can look at the present situation differently. You're entirely right; there is frustration. A few years ago, I had to face the frustration of all the harbour authorities in Quebec. It's the same thing in all the other regions. You must know that, if the harbour authorities were not there, your members would have to respond to all users, who would tell you that their harbour isn't working and would ask you to find money. What would happen then?

We're now receiving calls. If we leave tomorrow, you'll have to respond to all your taxpayers. For some time now, I've been saying—which may sound a bit funny—that the situation of the small craft harbours is so disastrous that management can no longer even afford to pay for fences. What will happen soon? That's somewhat what we're saying. I think it's important to go and also see the quality of the people in the fishing harbours. These are ordinary citizens who have given a lot for their region, and today it's like a small retirement for them. However, I think they would be happier if they were retired instead of working for the small craft harbours.

• (1300)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll warn you that with the interpretation, you have to speak just a bit slower. All of us are guilty of the same thing, but we've been trained.

Mr. Luc LeGresley: They used to say that to me also.

The Chair: We'll allow for just one final comment from Mr. Kamp, the parliamentary secretary to the minister.

We are out of time. It's one o'clock, and I have to be somewhere else, and the deputy chair and the deputy deputy chair are not here. We're going to have one more question, and whoever wants may take it.

An hon. member: We'll be glad to chair.

The Chair: You can ask questions after I adjourn.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Maybe we can stay informally.

I just wanted to offer three brief clarifications. The \$20 million wasn't announced earlier because it hasn't yet been officially announced, but the minister and the department thought it would be important that this committee know about it, in light of the discussion we're having with our guests.

The department has also assured us that if any capital funds become available throughout the course of the year in other areas, they will be shifted over into small craft harbours.

Third, the minister is continuing to work with the central agencies to obtain more funding for this.

The Chair: Do you have a quick comment, Mr. Lunney, or a question?

Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): What about me?

The Chair: Your name is not on the list.

You know what, gentlemen? I'm sure these three gentlemen, doing their jobs as well as they have, would be happy to stay and speak to parliamentarians and answer as long as you want, but we're out of committee time.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): While we're still on the record, I want to put in a protest here. If we're cutting the meeting short, we should redistribute the time so that some of the government members have a chance to participate in the bloody meeting.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Lunney, and I understand, but there's really not a lot I can do about it when Mr. MacAulay and Mr. Blais continue to go over time.

If you have a quick question, ask it—or you can ask it later.

Mr. Fabian Manning: I have a quick question I can ask—

Mr. James Lunney: Well, let me say this first.

I appreciate the way you guys have come in here with some very good information for us. I appreciate the theme, “creating the future together”. And your concern about burnout is a very real one. We have to take this more seriously. It's great to have volunteers taking on the responsibilities, but they can't do it without a measure of support. So I think you have the attention of the committee. We want to see that we do something to make sure you get more money into that.

I do want to ask a question. We have a very serious issue on the coast, and I want to give Mr. Baziuk a chance to respond with regard to the concerns I hear coming from the Fraser River small craft harbours. You have a big investment there, and we have a very serious issue this year with a huge snowpack. And because.... I heard dredging mentioned. We haven't been doing dredging adequately for the last number of years. The infrastructure of these small craft harbours might well be at risk this year.

Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. Bob Baziuk: I appreciate the time.

Very quickly, yes, it's a real issue out there. Putting dredging aside, the snowpacks up there, with the velocity of water that could come down, could severely jeopardize the infrastructure of the biggest commercial fishing harbour in Canada, just because of the debris that comes down the Fraser with that velocity of water. We already have a contingency plan to host other vessels in smaller harbours.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. Fabian Manning: Mr. Chair, I have one quick question.

The Chair: You have to be quick.

Mr. Fabian Manning: Maybe we should start on time, at 11 o'clock, when we give this presentation one hour.

Anyway, I'd like to thank you for your presentation. I think it was excellent.

I deal with 60 harbour authorities in my riding of Avalon, Newfoundland, out of 227 communities. They are wonderful volunteers; some are nice and pleasant, others get a bit upset and holler when they're not getting their funding. But we are making headway.

I want to ask you about divestiture, because it's a big issue in my riding. I realize that a very small amount of the funding this year will go towards divestiture. Have you any idea, or have you costed out—I'm sure you have—what divestiture will cost in Canada at the present time?

Mr. Osborne Burke: That question would probably be better answered by Fisheries and Oceans. The only number that I can recall being presented with somewhere was \$88 million, something in that range. But for a firm confirmation on the latest number, I'd suggest Fisheries and Oceans would be the best ones to ask.

• (1305)

Mr. Fabian Manning: All right. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc LeGresley: We all have to ask ourselves one question today, in view of the fact that time is running short. How can we ask all our volunteers to continue working so hard, when the money isn't there? How can we convince them to stay? We hope that the government will invest the necessary money to prevent these people from leaving the program. We have to ask ourselves this question, and the government has to send out a clear message. Give us a little time, be patient; failing that, you're going to lose people. We can do what we want, but I believe that will be impossible.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you to our witnesses. We appreciate your coming here today.

Most of us represent large fishery ridings, with a lot of wharves, a lot of infrastructure, a lot of fishermen to deal with. I appreciate the difficulty you face with fishermen on the wharves when you're trying to collect your fees, and I hope you appreciate how difficult it is to keep our membership down to the ten minutes, seven minutes, or five minutes they've been allocated so that everyone gets a chance to ask a question.

Certainly I speak on behalf of the committee when I say that we recognize the difficult situation that the harbour authorities are in with regard to getting funding from governments. I know the \$20 million that's now under the budget, the A-base funding, is needed. We realize, every one of us, from all the parties, that there is work to be done. The difficulty is finding that long-term funding and getting that long-term funding put in place.

I thank you for coming. I'm sure the members who had lots of questions, who needed more time, are going to stay and ask questions. Hopefully you'll be able to stay to answer them.

I'm going to adjourn the meeting. Thank you very much.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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