



Mrs. Colleen Swords  
Canadian embassy in the Netherlands  
Postbus 30820  
2500 GV Den Haag

Amsterdam, October 30, 2006

**Re: Canada joining the majority of the international community in support of a UN moratorium on high seas bottom trawling**

Dear Mrs. Swords,

I am disappointed to learn that Canada's new government has chosen not to support the proposed UN moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. In light of the known destructive nature of this fishing activity, the uncertain locations of vulnerable deep-sea habitats and the growing momentum on this issue both in Canada and internationally, we urge your Prime Minister Stephen Harper to reconsider Canada's regrettable position.

As a fishing nation and a country touching on three oceans, Canada has a special responsibility to protect the marine environment and those people who depend on it for their livelihoods. The upcoming meeting of the United Nations General Assembly presents an opportunity for Canada to take a leadership role on the international stage in protecting marine life and habitat for future generations. The proposed moratorium on deep-sea bottom trawling in international waters is a temporary measure aimed at protecting the rich marine life in the international waters of the high seas for which all nations, through the UN have responsibility. The call is to halt bottom trawling on the high seas until scientific data has been gathered to inform practical, enforceable and fair management plans.

This is not by any means a "blanket ban" on bottom trawling as suggested by your government but rather a temporary "time out".

Canadian fishers will not be affected by such a moratorium as it does not apply to bottom trawling in domestic waters and currently Canada does not have any fishing vessels bottom trawling on the high seas. Indeed, Canada like all nations stands to gain as we ensure protection of our oceans' biodiversity and healthy seas for future generations.

To date, over 1500 scientists worldwide have called for an immediate moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. Countries like Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the United States have joined the growing movement of countries prepared to take positive steps and support a moratorium on bottom trawling in international waters. By opposing such a move, Canada stands to aid in repeating past mistakes that resulted in the eventual collapse of the North Atlantic Cod fishery – a tragedy that all nations can learn a lesson from.

While we share Canada's desire to build and implement governance structures that will one day provide greater regulation and stewardship of our planet's oceans, time is running out and the destruction continues at an ever increasing rate. It is our sincere hope that Canada will reconsider its opposition to the bottom trawling moratorium and join with other responsible fishing nations in endorsing this practical solution to a mounting crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F.M. Nagel', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Drs. F.M. Nagel  
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C.c: Mr. Masoud Husain, Counsellor of the Canadian embassy in the Netherlands