



August 13, 2024

The Honourable Anita Anand
President of the Treasury Board
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Subject: Fishery officers excluded from equitable pension reform

Dear Ministers Anand and Lebouthillier,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the exclusion of fishery officers from the recent government announcement on June 13, 2024, about plans to expand earlier pension eligibility for frontline employees. While we commend the government for recognizing the critical roles of firefighters, paramedics, correctional service employees, border services officers, parliamentary protection officers, and search and rescue technicians, as New Democrats we support all workers from coast to coast to coast and believe it is a significant oversight to leave fishery officers out of this crucial reform.

Fishery officers are true frontline workers who perform demanding and hazardous duties. They are marine first responders who work tirelessly to ensure public safety and manage extensive natural resources. Their work often involves spending entire days at sea under challenging conditions, requiring a high level of physical and mental endurance. Despite their essential contributions, fishery officers do not receive adequate compensation or recognition compared to their federal counterparts.

The exclusion of fishery officers from the proposed pension reforms is not only unfair but also undermines the value of their critical work. Their role is important to our nation. Fishery officers should be granted the opportunity for retirement without penalty after 25 years of service, in recognition of the demanding nature of their duties and the significant risks they face.

Furthermore, fishery officers have long faced issues of inadequate compensation and wage disparity. Their salaries are lower compared to similar federal positions within Environment and Climate Change

Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, and Parks Canada. This disparity is demoralizing and negatively impacts staff retention.

We strongly urge you to take immediate action to advocate for the inclusion of fishery officers in the expanded earlier pension eligibility for frontline employees. Their historical significance being part of the first law enforcement group established in Canada with the Fisheries Act of 1868, and their ongoing dedication to safeguarding our waters and communities, deserves recognition and fair treatment.

Supporting and treating fishery officers fairly in this manner will not only boost their morale but also ensure the retention of skilled and experienced personnel who are essential to the safety and security of our nation. It is imperative that the government rectify this oversight and include fishery officers in the proposed pension reforms.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your positive response and actions to support Canada's fishery officers.

Sincerely,



MP Matthew Green
NDP Critic for Labour
Employment and Workplace
Development



MP Lisa Marie Barron
NDP Critic for Fisheries, Oceans
and the Canadian Coast Guard



MP Gord Johns
NDP Critic for Mental Health
and Harm Reduction