

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

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NDP Leader Writes Premier on Decision to Cancel National Marine Conservation Area

Today, Newfoundland and Labrador NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) wrote Premier Tony Wakeham with profound disappointment in his government's decision to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the feasibility assessment of a proposed South Coast Fjords National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) on the south coast of the island of Newfoundland.

In the letter, Dinn discusses the misinformation around the NMCA, highlighting that if government had meaningful consultation with the NMCA Steering Committee, they could have reached a decision that could work for all groups – reiterating that industry could continue in that area. He goes on to discuss the difference of an NMCA, and a Marine Protected Area (MPA), which are not the same.

“Opponents deliberately seem to conflate a Marine Protected Area (MPA), which falls under the jurisdiction of DFO and is far more restrictive, with an NMCA (managed by Parks Canada) and designed around collaborative governance. An NMCA is not an MPA,” Dinn wrote. “The proposed NMCA would be co-managed by a board made up of local, provincial, and federal stakeholders. Unlike an MPA, decisions are not made unilaterally and will use an adaptive management approach.”

“Over 95% [of the NMCA] would be designated multiple use and would allow such activities as soft aquaculture, commercial fishery that does not employ bottom trawling, and recreational activities,” Dinn continued. “This decision appears to have been shaped by misinformation and the failure on the part of your government to consult with members of the NMCA Steering Committee.”

Dinn says this is just another example of Wakeham's Conservatives making decisions based on partisan politics and personal opinion, rather than doing the work necessary to consult with stakeholders who have been working on this for 20 years.

“We urge your government to reverse its decision, allow the completion of the feasibility study, and immediately engage with the Steering Committee, the Town of Burgeo and surrounding communities, and other partners.”

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