



Ms. Shannon Arnold
Marine Program Senior Coordinator, Ecology Action Centre
Steering Committee, SeaChoice
219-2211 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC Canada V6K 4S2

1 February 2019

Dear Shannon,

Thank you for your letter. Stakeholder involvement is an important part of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) process, and I appreciate the time you have taken to highlight the issues at hand with the Eastern Canada offshore lobster fishery (ECOLF). I want to take this time to provide responses to some of the issues you have highlighted related to the MSC and our certification processes.

Expedited Audit and Call for Immediate Suspension

The MSC is a third-party standard setter, operating an independent certification program. This allows the MSC to maintain impartiality from individual assessments, as we are neither assessing nor certifying the fisheries. The conformity assessment body (CAB), who is responsible for the assessment and certification of the fishery, is the party who ultimately decides whether to conduct an expedited audit and/or suspend the fishery. I note that you have already written the CAB (Acoura) requesting an expedited audit and immediate suspension of the fishery. You should be hearing from them on how they plan to proceed. The MSC cannot and will not intervene in this regard, nor is any intervention necessary. The CAB has the information before it and will give it due consideration.

If you are unhappy with the CAB's determination on this or indeed any other matter, you can make a complaint to the CAB and if that is unsatisfactorily resolved, you can then make a complaint to Assurance Services International (ASI). At any point in time if you are unsatisfied with the performance of a CAB, you may also raise an incident with ASI and they will determine if it warrants further investigation.

Involvement of Clearwater in the MSC

Regarding the role of Christine Penny of Clearwater as a former co-chair of our Stakeholder Advisory Council (StAC; Christine's term ended last month), it is perhaps worth providing some clarification about the role of the StAC. The StAC's role is to advise on policy development not on individual assessment issues. Further, it doesn't have a decision-making function. Instead it is advisory to our Board of Trustees. While Christine was also a member of the Board too, she was there in her capacity as co-chair to reflect the views of the StAC. Most crucially, any



individual serving as a member of any of the MSC's governance bodies is not involved in CAB decisions on individual assessments. StAC includes representatives from the seafood industry, conservation community, market sector and academia to reflect diverse experiences, geographies and interests in relation to the work of the MSC. CAB representatives observe the StAC and Technical Advisory Board meetings but aren't full members.

Standard Compliance and Credibility of the MSC

Your concern with the ECOLF should not deter faith in the assessment process nor in the credibility of the MSC. The MSC is not involved in determining a fishery's compliance with our standard, with this role falling to the independent CAB, overseen by ASI. This is important to ensure that we maintain impartiality and credibility as a standards setter. As such, we will not be issuing any public statement on this matter. It is also important for the CAB to follow the MSC standard and procedures on this matter, which the checks built into the MSC system are designed to ensure. In the event you are not satisfied with the outcome of this issue, you can raise this directly as a complaint to the CAB overseeing the assessment and to ASI.

Again, thank you for reaching out and providing this candid feedback. Stakeholder involvement from organisations such as the EAC and SeaChoice is key to ensuring the rigour of assessments and continual improvement of our processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rohan Currey".

Dr Rohan Currey

Fisheries Standard Director
Marine Stewardship Council

CC:

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