



NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release
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Nova Scotia fishermen's association takes the lead on safety; commits \$1.3 million for new equipment

CHETICAMP, NS – The Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board (GNSFPB) is spending \$1.3 million dollars to buy safety equipment for 600 fishermen. The organization represents the interests of inshore fishermen in an area that extends from the New Brunswick border to the tip of Cape Breton in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is the second time in as many years that GNSFB has made a major safety investment. Last year it bought PFDs for every member in the Gulf of Nova Scotia, an investment worth \$230,000.

“We hope we never have to use this new equipment,” says Leonard LeBlanc, GNSFB’s Managing Director. “But if it saves just one life, then it was money very well spent.” LeBlanc also serves as Vice President of the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia.

The GNSFPB is buying 1200 immersion suits, 600 emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) and 100 additional PFDs for over 600 fishermen. It will also buy an automatic electronic defibrillator (AED) for each wharf in the Gulf of Nova Scotia. The equipment purchase is aligned with new safety requirements for commercial fishing vessels introduced by Transport Canada. The new rules will come into force this summer. The equipment will be provided to GNSFB’s harvesters at no cost.

“The Fisheries Safety Association of NS applauds the Gulf NS Fleet Planning Board for again stepping up to the plate to protect the health and safety of fishers and the public,” said Stewart Franck, Executive Director of the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia. “Providing this equipment will help ensure fishers in the Gulf fleet have the required life-saving equipment on board, and will encourage them to make sure they know how to use and maintain it.”

Immersion suits provide protection from cold water and would be put on if emergency ship abandonment were necessary. EPIRBs are used to alert search and rescue of a boat’s location in an emergency situation, speeding up rescue and recovery. Money to buy the equipment comes from proceeds generated by the federal shrimp quota. The equipment will be acquired and delivered through local safety supply partners.

“The GNSFPB believes in fishing communities, supports fishing families, and wants to help make sure that all harvesters return home safely after every trip,” says Leonard LeBlanc. “That’s what this investment is all about.”



Formed in 1995, the GNSFPB is an umbrella group that represents multi-species accredited fishing organizations, including the Gulf Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition, Gulf Bonafide Fishermen's Association, the MFU Local 4, the Inverness South Fishermen's Association, and the Northumberland Fishermen's Association. Through demonstrated leadership and inclusive representation, the group has been instrumental in developing historical changes that have positively impacted the safety of Gulf Nova Scotia fishermen.

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Additional Quotes:

"I'm glad that the GNSFPB is able to provide harvesters with this important safety equipment for their vessels. I hope that most of this equipment will never have to be used, but at least it will be there in the event that it is needed."

Ronnie Heighton, President of the Northumberland Fishermen's Association

"Local 4, as part of the GNSFPB, is pleased that we can continue to lead the way in supporting training and safety in the independent core inshore fishing fleet. Providing PFDs and now EPIRBs, immersion suits, and AEDs to fishermen of Gulf NS will benefit all those involved in the inshore fishery."

Gordon Beaton, President of the MFU Local 4

"I'm proud to belong to, the GNSFPB. It's a group of harvesters who truly value the safety and training of members."

Jordan MacDougall, President of the Inverness South Fishermen's Association

"The purchase of safety equipment for fishermen in the Gulf of Nova Scotia illustrates the commitment to safety in the industry and builds on the necessary safety equipment required on board their vessels. I believe that many harvesters are becoming more safety conscious, and I'm very pleased to be part of this initiative."

Brendan Doyle, President of the Gulf Bonafide Fishermen's Association

"We believe in the safety of our fishing communities, fishing families, and fishermen because all are affected when there is an accident at sea."

Leonard LeBlanc, President of the Gulf of Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition

"It's initiatives like this one that are driving the creation of a strong safety culture in fishing. It's also in keeping with the goals of our province's Workplace Safety Strategy, which calls for leaders like Leonard LeBlanc and the GNSFPB to create a safer future for the industry, and our province."

Stuart MacLean, CEO, WCB Nova Scotia



"We at *Entreprise Shippagan Ltd* and *Vernon d'Eon Fishing Supplies* are proud and honored to be participating with the Gulf NS Fleet Planning Board in this incredible effort to promote and assure the safety of the fishermen at their workplace which happens to be beautiful waters and coastlines of the Maritimes. Working in the fishing industry is unique in its conditions, which vigilance and awareness is always required in order to assure that these brave men and women can work in the safest conditions possible. At *Enterprises Shippagan* and *Vernon d'Eon Fishing Supplies*, we feel privileged to play a small role in this specific worker safety initiative and will continue to work with all entities across the Maritimes to help promote safety in the industry for years to come." ***Entreprise Shippagan Ltd and Vernon d'Eon Fishing Supplies***

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