



2014

Annual Performance Report

for

**The Appeal Board of the
Professional Fish Harvesters
Certification Board**

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1.0 Message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the Appeal Board of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (Appeal Board), I am pleased to present our Annual Performance Report for 2014, the first reporting year of our 2014-2016 planning cycle. This document has been prepared in consultation with the other Appeal Board members, and we accept accountability for the results reported, and for ensuring that the information in this report is accurate and thorough.

The Appeal Board of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board is recognized as a category three public entity by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with all three members appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Therefore, we are submitting this report in fulfillment of our reporting obligations under the provincial *Transparency and Accountability Act*. We are privileged to serve the professional fish harvesters of this province in our capacity as the current Appeal Board appointees, and we take pride in meeting the objective of the Appeal Board, as outlined in our 2014-2016 Activity Plan.

Though the Appeal Board is a relatively small public body, convening twice in 2014, it continues to make an essential contribution to the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board and the commercial fish harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador. The structure, purpose, and operations of the Appeal Board are established in the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*, and we confirm that during this reporting period all activities of the Appeal Board were conducted accordingly.

Finally, as chairperson of the Appeal Board of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, I take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board for their continued assistance and support in 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Wilton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Wilton
Chairperson, PFHCB Appeal Board

2.0 Overview

The Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB) became operational in 1997 following proclamation of the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act* by the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly. This legislation allows for the establishment of an Appeal Board, and an independent appeal process.

Any professional fish harvester whose certification is refused by the PFHCB, or who is dissatisfied with the certification status he or she is given, may appeal to the Appeal Board. The decision of the Appeal Board is final and binding on the PFHCB and the appellant.

2.1 Mandate

The mandate of the PFHCB Appeal Board is outlined in sections 14-18 of the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*, as follows:

Appeal to board

- 14.** (1) A person whose certification is refused by the board or who is dissatisfied with the certification that he or she is given may appeal to the appeal board appointed under section 15.
- (2) A person who wishes to appeal a decision of the board with respect to his or her certificate shall file a notice of appeal with the executive director stating the ground for the appeal.
- (3) The executive director shall forward the notice of appeal to the appeal board and shall inform the appellant of the date, time and place at which the board will hear the appeal.

Appeal board

- 15.** (1) The appeal board shall consist of 3 members appointed by the minister.
- (2) Two of the members shall be professional fish harvesters who are not members of the board chosen from a list provided by fish harvesters organizations.
- (3) The third member of the board shall not be a professional fish harvester and shall serve as the chairperson.
- (4) The members of the appeal board shall be appointed for a 3 year term and are eligible for re-appointment.

Date of appeal board

- 16.** The appeal board shall review all the relevant information associated with an appellant's application to the board for certification and shall provide the appellant an opportunity to appear before the board in person or through a representative.

Decision of appeal board

- 17.** The appeal board may confirm the decision of the board or may substitute the decision which it considers fair and just.

Decision final

18. The decision of the appeal board is final and binding on the board and the appellant.

2.2 Appeal Board Members and Support Staff

The Appeal Board consists of three members appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. For the duration of the 2014 reporting period the Appeal Board members were:

Robert Wilton – Chairperson
Roy Stone – Fish Harvester Representative
Doug Howlett – Fish Harvester Representative

Operational and administrative support for the Appeal Board is provided by the staff of the PFHCB.

2.3 Lines of Business

The Appeal Board has a single line of business: the provision of an independent appeal process for any person who files a notice of appeal with the Executive Director of the PFHCB. All business is conducted in accordance with sections 14-18 of the Act.

As required, the Appeal Board convenes (at least once per year) to hear appeals throughout the province. Appeals are conducted in as many locations as possible, based on the number and location of appeals to be heard.

Appeal results are approved and signed by the Appeal Board members and presented to the PFHCB Executive Director in a timely manner. Appellants are notified of their appeal outcome in writing by the PFHCB, accordingly.

2.4 Values

The Appeal Board's ability to provide an effective independent appeals process requires that both the PFHCB and the fish harvesters it certifies have a high level of confidence in the Appeal Board members and the service they provide. To this end, the Appeal Board adopts and promotes three key values: *Respect*, *Confidentiality* and *Impartiality*, as described in section 7.0 of the Appeal Board's 2014-2016 Activity Plan.

2.5 Vision

Members of the Appeal Board adopt the vision of the PFHCB. The PFHCB and the Appeal Board's vision is a viable Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fishery, sustained by independent professional fish harvesters committed to demonstrating appropriate knowledge,

skills, and commitment to safely and successfully meet the human resources needs of their industry, from which they can maintain their livelihood with respect and dignity.

The PFHCB Appeal Board contributes to its vision by ensuring, through the appeals process, that each appellant receives a thorough independent assessment of all information pertinent to PFHCB certification, and is subsequently awarded a certification level that appropriately reflects their knowledge, skill and attachment to the industry.

2.6 Location and Contact Information

The Appeal Board itself has no fixed location. However, any correspondence, including appeal requests from certified fish harvesters, should be directed to the Executive Director of the PFHCB.

Mark Dolomount, Executive Director
368 Hamilton Avenue
P.O. Box 8541
St. John's, NL A1B 3P2
709-722-8170 (phone)
709-722-8201 (fax)
pfh@pfhcb.com
www.pfhcb.com

2.7 Finances

The expenditures associated with the PFHCB Appeal Board, and independent appeal process, are covered by the annual operating budget of the PFHCB. Those expenditures include travel costs of Appeal Board members, administrative costs associated with the delivery of appeals, and the per diem remunerations for Appeal Board members. There are no fees charged to fish harvesters for appealing their certification status.

Every effort is made by Appeal Board members and support staff to conduct the appeals process in a thorough, yet expeditious and cost-effective manner.

Annual Appeal Board expenditures are audited, and included in the audited financial statements of the PFHCB. Total Appeal Board expenditures for 2014 were \$7,920.

3.0 Activities

The Appeal Board convened twice in 2014, and conducted a combined total of five days of appeals from February 10-13, 2014, and on August 14, 2014. In order to accommodate all appellants, and minimize their driving time to and from their appeal hearing, the Appeal Board conducted appeals in five locations throughout the province – Corner Brook, Grand Falls, Gander, Clarenville, and St. John’s. Four appellants requested to have their appeals heard by teleconference. The following is a summary of appeal hearings conducted in 2014:

Winter 2014 Appeals (13 hearings in total)

<u>Date of Appeal Request</u>	<u>Date of Appeal</u>	<u>Home Community</u>	<u>Appeal Location</u>
October 1, 2013	February 10, 2014	Trout River	Corner Brook
January 16, 2014	February 10, 2014	Robinsons	Corner Brook
November 26, 2013	February 10, 2014	Conche	(via Teleconference)
September 10, 2013	February 11, 2014	Hermitage	(via Teleconference)
March 12, 2013	February 11, 2014	Leading Ticks	Grand Falls
April 15, 2013	February 11, 2014	Shoe cove	Grand Falls
October 7, 2013	February 11, 2014	La Scie	Grand Falls
October 15, 2013	February 12, 2014	Centreville	Gander
July 29, 2013	February 12, 2014	Eastport	Gander
May 24, 2013	February 12, 2014	Gooseberry Cove	Clarenville
April 18, 2013	February 13, 2014	Mount Pearl	St. John’s
October 31, 2013	February 13, 2014	Old Perlican	St. John’s
July 24, 2013	February 13, 2014	Burnt Islands	St. John’s (*upon request)

Summer 2014 Appeals (2 hearings in total)

<u>Date of Appeal Request</u>	<u>Date of Appeal</u>	<u>Home Community</u>	<u>Appeal Location</u>
March 28, 2013	August 14, 2014	St. Lunaire	(via Teleconference)
April 22, 2014	August 14, 2014	Black tickle	(via Teleconference)

15 appellants had appeal hearings in 2014. At the time of the appeals, eight were registered as Apprentice fish harvesters, six were registered as Level I fish harvesters, and one was not approved for certification. The outcome of the 15 appeals was as follows:

- 9 appeals – No change in status
- 2 appeals – Apprentice upgraded to Level II
- 4 appeals – Level I upgraded to Level II

A full description and explanation of the three levels of PFHCB certification (Apprentice, Level I, and Level II), as well as related certification criteria, can be found on the PFHCB website at www.pfhcb.com.

3.1 Outcome of Objectives

In the Appeal Board's 2014-2016 Activity Plan, a single strategic issue was identified, relating to the Appeal Board's ability to maintain a timely delivery of appeal hearings in regional proximity to appellants. An objective for 2014, accompanied by a performance measure and indicators was included, as follows:

Objective #1: By December 31, 2014, the PFHCB Appeal Board will have conducted appeals, in a timely manner, in all regions of the province where appellants are located.

Measure: Appellants were offered a timely face-to-face appeal in their own region of the province.

Indicators: Each appellant was offered an appeal within a maximum of 12 months of their appeal request.

Each appellant was offered a face-to-face appeal.

Each appellant was offered an appeal hearing within 3 hours drive of their permanent residence.

The Appeal Board, with the assistance of PFHCB support staff, succeeded in meeting this stated objective for 2014. The 15 appellants were each offered a face-to-face appeal hearing within twelve months of the date of their appeal request.

Of the 15 appellants, 4 requested to have their appeal heard via teleconference, so proximity of the appeal hearing was not a factor for those appeals. However, for the remaining 11 appeals, the Appeal Board was successful in meeting its objective as it relates to regional proximity to appellants. In 10 cases, the maximum drive time from home to the appeal venue, for any individual, was less than three hours. In the remaining case, the appellant requested to have their appeal heard outside their region, therefore proximity of the appeal hearing was not a factor in that case.

3.2 Objectives for 2015

As outlined in the Appeal Board's 2014-2016 Activity Plan, a single issue is presented for 2015. Our objective is limited to logistics of appeal delivery, as it would not be appropriate to deal with the specifics of individual appeal hearings and/or their respective outcomes.

Issue #1 – The Timely Delivery of Appeals in Regional Proximity to Appellants

Each year since its inception in 1997, the Appeal Board has conducted appeals throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Until 2010, appeals were scheduled twice per year - spring and fall - in all areas of the province where appellants were located.

During recent years, the number of appeal requests varied significantly from year to year, from a low of 3 in 2010, to a high of 22 in 2013. As a result, it is difficult for the Appeal Board to offer face-to-face appeals in all areas of the province twice per year. Therefore, the Board will continue to offer appeal hearings within 12 months of receiving an appeal request. This will assist the Appeal Board in meeting its stated objectives, in an efficient and cost effective manner, for this planning period.

Objective #2: By December 31, 2015, the Appeal Board will have conducted appeals, in a timely manner, in all regions of the province where appellants are located.

Measure: Appellants were offered a timely face-to-face appeal in their own region of the province.

Indicators: Each appellant was offered an appeal within a maximum of 12 months of their appeal request.

Each appellant was offered a face-to-face appeal.

Each appellant was offered an appeal hearing within 3 hours drive of their permanent residence.

4.0 Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The Appeal Board continues to provide an essential service to the nearly 10,000 fish harvesters registered with the PFHCB. In the past several years there has been a significant fluctuation in the number of appeal requests received. This uncertainty and annual variation in the number of appeals requested continues to pose challenges for the Appeal Board and PFHCB support staff in meeting the stated objectives in an efficient and cost-effective manner. It has also made budget projections and planning challenging. If the number of appeal requests continues to remain high (22 in 2012, 16 in 2013, and 15 in 2014), the PFHCB Appeal Board may have to consider convening twice in 2015, as it did in 2013 and 2014.

The Appeal Board remains committed to: providing all certified fish harvesters the opportunity of an independent appeal process, meeting the objectives stated in the 2014-2016 Activity Plan, and meeting the planning and reporting obligations of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

5.0 Additional Information

To inquire or comment on the contents of this report, or for additional information about the PFHCB Appeal Board, please contact:

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