



Standing Fish Price-Setting Panel

Activity Plan
2026-2029

For more information:

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REFERENCE PERIOD

This plan covers the fiscal period of April 1, 2026, through to
March 31, 2029.

Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to submit the multi-year Activity Plan of the Standing Fish Price- Setting Panel for the fiscal years April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029. This plan has been prepared in compliance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. The panel is categorized as a Category 3 government entity and is required to prepare a performance-based activity plan. The panel is accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its objectives. In developing this plan, the board has considered the strategic directions of the Provincial Government.

Looking forward, the panel is cognizant of its role and the need to deliver its mandate in an effective and efficient manner while contributing to the economic stability of the fishing industry. We facilitate and encourage successful collective bargaining, however, when parties are unable to reach agreement through the normal collective bargaining process, the panel will set fish prices and conditions of sale through a final offer selection arbitration process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sheila M. Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sheila" being more prominent.

Sheila M. Murphy
Chair

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Overview

The Fishing Industry Collective Bargaining Act regulates collective bargaining between fish harvesters and processors. The collective bargaining framework was created in 1971 and has been amended several times to prohibit strikes or lockouts by providing for binding arbitration using different models: a single arbitrator or binding arbitration using a Standing Fish Price-Setting Panel, which is the current model.

Established in 2006, the panel is required to set the price and conditions of sale for fish when parties are unable to do so through the collective bargaining process. Specific duties of members are outlined in Section 19.2 of the Act and include: annually identifying, in consultation with stakeholders, particular fish species for collective bargaining; collecting and disseminating market information; establishing parameters for negotiations; facilitating collective bargaining; acting as an arbitration panel for the parties in setting fish prices; setting hearing dates; and reviews issues referred by the minister.

The panel consists of the following members:

- Sheilagh M. Murphy, K.C. Chair
- John Whelan, Alternate Chair
- Ronald McCabe, Alternate Chair
- Brian Vallis, Regular Member
- Earle McCurdy, Regular Member
- William Reid, Alternate Member
- Arthur Dodd, Alternate Member

The panel has 3 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council: a chair (recommended by the minister), one representing the certified bargaining agent, and one representing the processors' organization.

The panel is supported by the Labour Relations Division of the Department of Government Services which provides facilitation, administration and secretarial support services for panel activities and stakeholders' work in establishing fish prices. The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture also provides support by providing market data and industry reports.

Primary Clients

The panel's clients are the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP), which represents most fish processors in the province and the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW-Unifor) which represents fish harvesters in the province.

Mandate

The mandate of the panel is to consult with industry stakeholders to identify particular fish species for collective bargaining, and to ensure price and conditions of sale are in place by the date established by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The panel establishes parameters to facilitate collective bargaining, acts as an arbitration panel where the parties to negotiations fail to agree and has the authority to set prices when negotiations do not take place.

The legislative authority establishing the panel and its role and responsibilities is contained in Sections 19.1 to 19.16 of the Act.

Vision

The vision of the panel is an optimal collective bargaining climate between fish harvesters and processors in the province to ensure binding collective agreements are in place for the timely start of the fisheries on an annual basis.

Issues

Issue 1: Ensure binding collective agreements are established annually for particular species.

Where particular fish species are identified for collective bargaining purposes and where binding collective agreements are not achieved, the panel will ensure arbitration hearings are held, and prices and conditions of sale established. The following objective and indicators apply to the fiscal years April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029 and will be reported on in the relevant annual reports.

Objective

By March 31, 2027, 2028 and 2029, the panel will have ensured collective agreements are in place and prices and conditions of sale for fish species are established prior to the date established by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Indicators:

1. Industry stakeholders responsible for collective bargaining of fish species are notified of the dates by which binding collective agreements are to be in effect.
2. Requisite facilitation and mediation services are made available to the parties to collective bargaining through the Labour Relations Division, to assist the parties in achieving a collective agreement.
3. Industry stakeholders responsible for collective bargaining of fish species are notified of panel hearing dates, where the parties did not achieve a collective agreement.
4. Where collective agreements are not achieved in bargaining, arbitration hearings are conducted to provide the parties to collective bargaining with an opportunity to represent their respective positions to the panel.

5. Following a hearing, the panel will make and inform industry stakeholders of timely decisions establishing prices and conditions of sale for the particular fish species.

Issue 2: Recommend legislative or regulatory amendments that provide a realistic mechanism for price setting.

The panel may consult with fishing industry stakeholders to seek input on improving both the collective bargaining process and the process by which the panel makes decisions. If this process identifies an area where changes are necessary to improve collective bargaining or the hearing process, improvements may be made through legislative amendments. The panel may make representation to the Minister of Government Services, to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, or to both.

The following objective and indicators apply to the fiscal years April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029 and will be reported on in the relevant annual reports.

Objective

By March 31, 2027, 2028 and 2029, the panel, where it is warranted, may make recommendations to the Minister responsible, with respect to an amendment to, or modification of, the legislation as well as revisions or updates to the panel's rules and procedures

Indicators:

1. The collective bargaining process is monitored.
2. Recommendations for changes to the legislation are proposed, as warranted.

