
MOU taking too long: Dean

The provincial government needs to be more proactive to ensure the timely success of the fishing industry's Memorandum of Understanding process, says Straits-White Bay North MHA Marshall Dean.

Last week in the legislature, Mr. Dean questioned the minister of fisheries on the need for a formal community voice in the MOU process. He said timely market analysis and free trade advice on financial assistance were necessities.

" We are nearing the one-year anniversary of the signing of this agreement and at the rate this process is unfolding, I am fearful that it will be years before there is any significant headway," said Mr. Dean. " To begin with, there is a glaring need for a broader and formal inclusion of voices in the MOU process, including that of communities. The upcoming changes in the fishery restructuring will impact their viability and perhaps their future; and they deserve a say now, not months or years down the road."

Mr. Dean also said government commissioned a report on the investments considered to be North American Free Trade Agreement risks, but failed to broaden the terms of reference to include the type of investments government could provide to help the industry through this challenging time.

" This type of information would certainly aid the process once the point of making investments is reached. Plus, a marketing analysis is such a critical part of this whole process and the later that piece comes together, the longer the solutions will take to implement," he said.

"Furthermore, there is the whole involvement of the federal government as a major stakeholder and what strategies are being worked on by this government to bring them onside now and not months down the road. A great many pieces of the MOU puzzle, including that of fishery science, are still not even fitted into the picture, nor acted upon.

process of reshaping the fishery to ensure its long-term survival. I am urging government to take a more comprehensive and proactive approach to ensure the success of the MOU process and rebuild and manage our fishing industry."

"Ultimately, this means a drawnout