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Grand Chief Daniels Supports Funding for Fisheries

New programs mean Manitoba First Nations' fishers won't be left behind

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — Grand Chief Jerry Daniels of the Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO) welcomes the announcement of up to \$469.4 million in new measures to support Canada's fish harvesters who have been hit by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The inland freshwater fishery is a multi-million dollar industry in Manitoba, and I am relieved to see that our First Nation fishers won't be left behind as federal assistance is allocated to sectors across the country," said Grand Chief Daniels.

First Nation fishers are some of the largest producers of freshwater fish in Canada, and commercial fishing provides income and a way of life for more than 3,000 First Nation fishers in Manitoba. This financial support is good news not only for the local economy, but for markets and restaurants across Canada and the United States, and as far away as France and Japan.

The Government of Canada announced the launch of the Fish Harvester Benefit, a program worth up to \$267.6 million, to provide income support to eligible self-employed fish harvesters not able to access the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

The government also announced the Fish Harvester Grant, a program worth up to \$201.8 million, to provide grants to help fish harvesters who are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but not eligible for the Canada Emergency Business Account. The program would provide non-repayable support of up to \$10,000 to self-employed fish harvesters with a valid fishing license.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the stress of everyday living, and because so many of our families already experience food scarcity, this crisis has made their situations so much worse," Grand Chief Daniels. "During this extraordinarily difficult time, support for fishers strengthens the ability of First Nations' people to not only feed themselves and their families, but to bring food to the tables of people across the country and beyond."

In addition to supporting and advocating for 34 First Nations communities in Manitoba, SCO is leading development of a marketing guide to support inland fishers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 Anishinaabe and Dakota First Nations in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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