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Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak here this afternoon and provide testimony to the Bill 419.

I am presenting on behalf of the multispecies harvesters that make up the Maritime Fisherman's Union. Our members fish lobster, crab, tuna, scallops, herring, along with many other commercially viable species along the shores of Nova Scotia.

Currently the fishing industry in Nova Scotia contributes over \$1.68 billion to the economy. The Coastal communities all over NS depend on this industry to be vibrant and economically healthy. The fishing industry is the main economic driver and its demise will be catastrophic to the our Coastal communities and to the Province as a whole.

There are many players in the fishery when it comes to enforcement. We recognize this challenge and because of this our organization has, in the past, convened a table that included every player involved in this complex issue. This was done in order to find solutions to the illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing that affects the commercial fish harvesters in Nova Scotia. We recognize that this problem has many prongs and the solution does not rest on one entity or one government department.

That said, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to tighten the penalties that the Government of Nova Scotia has control over through this Bill and *the Fisheries and Coastal Resource Act*. It is critically important for the future of the fishery in NS that your Act has the power to prosecute those in contravention of your Act.

We feel that this Act must give the responsible and enforceable regulations the teeth to send a clear message that there are dire outcomes to businesses that are in contravention.

We believe the following changes should be made to attain this outcome.

Penalties 116 (1) A person who contravenes any provision of this Act or the regulations or fails to comply with a term or condition of any licence or lease issued pursuant to this Act is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine **not less than** one million dollars or to imprisonment for a period of **not less** than ninety days, or to both a fine and imprisonment. (2) Where an offence under subsection (1) is committed on more than one day or continues for more than one day, it shall

be deemed to be a separate offence for each day on which the offence is committed or continued. (3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a person who is guilty of a second or subsequent offence, other than by virtue of subsection (2), is liable to a fine of not less than one million dollars nor more than five hundred thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a period of not more than six months, or to both a fine and imprisonment. 1996, c. 25, s. 116; 1999, c. 2, s. 9.

We support;

PART III

FISHERIES AND COASTAL RESOURCES ACT

10 (1) Subsection 116(1) of Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1996, the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, as amended by Chapter 2 of the Acts of 1999, is further amended by striking out "one hundred thousand" and substituting "one million".

(2) Subsection 116(3) of Chapter 25, as amended by Chapter 2 of the Acts of 1999, is further amended by striking out "of not less than one hundred thousand dollars and nor more than five hundred thousand" and substituting "not exceeding two million".

We also believe strongly that those in contravention of your Act should lose their license to operate upon the first offence. Nothing short of this will send a clear message that the Province will not tolerate any violation that affects the import of the fishing communities ability to continue to provide the crucial ability to maintain a strong economy for not only fish harvesters, Coastal communities, the complete fishery and the Province of NS as a whole.

I appreciate this opportunity to present to you today and truly hope that our suggestions will be seriously considered.

Ruth Inniss
Fisheries Advisor
Maritime Fishermen's Union.