

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT RENEWS CALL FOR SUSPENSION OF COMMERCIAL CAPELIN FISHERY

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, April 8, 2019 – NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) President Todd Russell today issued the following statement:

“NCC is again calling upon the Government of Canada to suspend the commercial capelin fishery in Atlantic Canada. The latest scientific information on capelin is extremely limited, given the lack of biomass estimates and incomplete coverage of the stock area north of Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Division 3L. This division is a vast area that includes the waters off NunatuKavut. NunatuKavut Inuit traditional knowledge indicates capelin are arriving later (if at all), in fewer numbers and smaller in size. This appears consistent with the limited information available on capelin from a fall multi-species research vessel survey conducted in NAFO Division 2J each year. Capelin has played an important role in the culture, history and economy of our people for generations and the continued very low abundance is of grave concern.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is expected to release its Total Allowable Catch (TAC) decision in the near future. NCC believes that making these decisions on very limited scientific information is extremely risky given that capelin is a primary prey species, and vitally important to the recovery of the northern cod stock. There is need for an expanded and more sustained longer-term research program for capelin, which includes both modern science and Indigenous knowledge, so that its role in the ecosystem is more fully understood. NCC is, therefore, asking for a suspension of the capelin fishery based on the following factors:

- Conservation of current stock
- Use of Indigenous knowledge
- Need for science-based decisions
- Role of capelin in the marine ecosystem

The people of NunatuKavut have had a long and important relationship with capelin and NCC wants to ensure it is protected now and for the future.”

NCC Media Contact:

Kelly Broomfield
Director of Communications
T. 709-280-5965