



Seals & Sealing Network

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Seals and Sealing Network Geneva Bound

Calls on WTO to set aside ruling upholding EU ban on the import of seal products

Ottawa – March 14, 2014 –Representatives of the Canadian Seals and Sealing Network (SSN) are travelling to Geneva to observe the WTO public hearings into the European seal products ban. The hearings, scheduled for March 17 – 19, are the latest development in the WTO’s final Appellate body review of the European trade ban.

Dion Dakins, Chair of the SSN, and CEO of Carino Processing in Newfoundland and Labrador says that his goal will be to demonstrate to Europeans that the Canadian seal hunt is sustainable, humane and necessary. “The negative impact that unmanaged seal populations have on fish stocks is well documented,” said Dakins, citing a [Canadian Senate Fisheries and Ocean](#) report that says the population of grey seals eastern Canada increased from about 13,000 animals in 1960 to between 330,000 and 410,000 animals in 2010 threatening the recovery of cod and other groundfish stock as just one example.

Aaju Peter, an Inuit lawyer and sealskin designer from Nunavut, hopes her message that the seal ban has had devastating cultural, social and economic impacts on the Inuit will be heard. “In the North and remote coastal regions, where economic options are few, sealing provides not only a source of income but also provides access to food and other essential products.”

The SSN is a founding member of the newly-formed [Trade Fairness Coalition](#), a group comprised of sustainable-use and resource- based business, trading industries, service sectors and leading trade experts concerned about the WTO’s decision to uphold the seal ban based on moral grounds. “Upholding the seal ban on moral grounds sets a dangerous precedent that could lead to trade bans affecting other sustainable-use industries,” warns Peter.

“Canada has made significant progress addressing some of the concerns identified by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report that led to the ban,” added Dakins. “[New regulations and enforcement procedures ensure the highest degree of humane treatment](#). It’s time for Canada and Europe to work together to find mutually agreeable solutions to overabundant seal populations.”

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For more information or to schedule an interview with a member of the SSN, please contact:

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*The **Seals and Sealing Network** is a national non-profit organization promoting sustainable and wise use principles. The Seals and Sealing Network is committed to the conservation and respectful harvesting of the world's seal species through sound scientific management and internationally accepted sustainable use practices. It comprises government, Inuit, veterinarians, conservationists, health care practitioners and Industry representatives. For more information, please go to www.sealsandsealing.net.*

*The **Trade Fairness Coalition** is a group formed by members of the sustainable use and resource based business community who are concerned about the WTO's seriously flawed decision to invoke the "public morality exception" to uphold the European ban on seal products, in spite of the ban's violation of international trade law. The Coalition has developed a joint statement that organizations and the public can sign to support the initiative. For more information or to schedule an interview with a spokesperson for the Trade Fairness Coalition, please contact us at info@tradefairness.com or visit www.tradefairness.com*