

Friday, 12 September 2008

Press Release: Joint Media Statement

Joint Media Statement from New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, South East Finfish Management Ltd, Challenger Finfisheries Management Company Ltd, and the Northern Fisheries Management Stakeholder Company Ltd

Interim relief sought for fishermen in pending court case

Interim relief from new fishing restrictions to protect the livelihoods of fishermen whose businesses will otherwise be destroyed has been sought today in the High Court.

“We’ve been deliberately very conservative in our application,” said the President of the NZFCF (New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen), Doug Saunders-Loder.

“We’ve applied mainly for seasonal relief in those fishing grounds where jobs are at immediate risk. We’re absolutely not asking for interim orders that will threaten our Maui’s and Hector’s dolphin populations.”

The NZFCF, in conjunction with other commercial inshore stakeholders, South East Finfish Management Ltd, Challenger Finfisheries Management Company Ltd, and the Northern Fisheries Management Stakeholder Company Ltd, is asking the High Court to review recent decisions by Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton to close around two thirds of New Zealand's coastline to fishing in response to concerns about Hector's and Maui's dolphins.

The interim orders have been applied for on behalf of the inshore fishermen and Quota owners most acutely affected by the decision.

“These are the most extensive changes to commercial and recreational access to inshore fisheries in two decades. They are, in our view, unnecessarily onerous and will drive people out of business even in areas where dolphins are not at risk.”

If small changes such as fishing for a limited season in discrete areas can be made without any danger at all to dolphins, then fishermen will be able to continue to fish enough to keep their businesses going and some staff in jobs Mr Saunders-Loder said.

“We think that is a very reasonable request.”

ENDS