



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### ***OCI sets the record straight on the export of fish species; says giveaways not on the table***

January 17, 2012

ST. JOHN'S, NL—Martin Sullivan, President and CEO of Ocean Choice International (OCI), today clarified information provided in recent days by the head of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW), Earle McCurdy, on the export of fish product from Newfoundland and Labrador. Sullivan said what McCurdy has said is misleading and ought to be corrected.

“McCurdy stated that OCI is exporting 80% of its fish for processing elsewhere in countries like China,” said Sullivan. “To the contrary, practically all fish exported to countries around the world is done so in whole form, and it’s done that way for two reasons: customers want their product whole, and it returns the highest economic value we can get for our fishers, suppliers and the people of the province.”

Sullivan said OCI is filleting a very small portion of its flatfish outside Newfoundland and Labrador. “OCI has engaged with other countries to fillet fish, but quite frankly this has waned to the point where we will eliminate this from our business mix in the very near future because it has always been a money-losing venture,” said Sullivan.

OCI said that when processing restrictions were lifted for other species like snow crab, capelin, turbot, mackerel, and lobster, the industry was able to unlock tremendous value for fishers and everyone who benefits from the fishery and this was supported by the FFAW and others. “On this point, we commend government for allowing everyone in the industry to benefit,” said Sullivan.

The company used snow crab as a case in point, explaining that it isn’t a case where we couldn’t find a customer to purchase crab meat extracted from the shell, but the margins are not there to make it economical. “Mr. McCurdy and his counterparts at the FFAW are well aware that if we were to revert back to the restrictive days when we were mandated to land snow crab and remove the meat before selling it to customers, we would also be dialing back the economic benefits to our fishers by

some 500%. I know for sure inshore fishermen would not be happy with this move. Would they prefer 50 cents a pound under the old system or the \$2.50 a pound they are receiving today?"

"We stand with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in saying there will be no more giveaways of our resources," he said.

What OCI is requesting of government is to allow for the same economic value to be achieved with flatfish and redfish. In doing so, the company said the union must also recognize that jobs which will result at sea on board vessels are just as important as jobs on land in plants. "To say that one job is lesser than another is wrong," said Sullivan. "We're moving to more work at sea, less on land," he said, "and by doing this we will employ more people on a full time basis than we've seen in years in this sector." Every pound of flatfish and redfish is put through a processing plant at sea that is registered with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, like those on land.

### **About OCI**

Ocean Choice International is one of Canada's leading vertically integrated seafood harvesting, processing and marketing companies with operations throughout Atlantic Canada and Sales & Marketing offices around the world. As one of Canada's largest wild fish quota holder OCI is a leader in fishing and processing technology and market development.

For further information check [www.oceanchoice.com/future](http://www.oceanchoice.com/future)

Media contact:

Paula Kieley, OCI, (709) 782-7122