



GO FISHING, GO TO JAIL

There's something's fishy about Bill C-246

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peterborough, Ont: Canadian families who fish together will do time together if Bill C-246 becomes law.

The 'Modernizing Animal Protections Act' was introduced last week by Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith of Toronto. It is being promoted as legislation to ban of the importation of shark fins and outlaw the practice of shark finning in Canadian waters. But that is only the tip of the fin.

An activist coalition of Canadian and U.S. animal rights organizations with a decades-long history of sustained attacks on anglers and farmers quickly supported the private member's bill. Led by the International Fund for Animal Welfare of Yarmouth, Massachusetts and the Toronto-based Animal Alliance of Canada, these groups have once again come out in strong support of federal legislation which threatens a criminal charge, up to a \$10,000 fine and five years jail time for anglers who harvest a few fish for dinner.

Provisions in Bill C-246 clearly make it possible for someone who catches a fish to face criminal prosecution for cruelty to animals. Even the act of baiting a hook with a worm would be considered an act of cruelty according to the Bill.

Specifically, Section 182.1.1 states that:

182.1 (1) Everyone commits an offence who, willfully or recklessly,
(b) kills an animal or, being the owner, permits an animal to be killed, brutally or viciously, regardless of whether the animal dies immediately;

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This section poses the same threat as the seven previous iterations of similar bills. According to exhaustive legal opinions, for the first time in Canadian history this section would make it an offence to kill an animal brutally or viciously – without defining those terms – and does not exempt from this offence normal hunting and fishing activities. Hunting and fishing necessarily involve the killing of animals. Animal rights groups consistently attempt to portray these traditional Canadian heritage activities as inherently brutal and vicious. If Bill C-246 becomes law, this section will be used by animal rights activists who will employ provisions of the Criminal Code to bring private prosecutions to harass lawful anglers and hunters.

“Once again we see the timeworn tactic by these MP’s and groups of fronting a façade which appears to promote a seemingly reasonable solution to an animal cruelty issue, while concealing the true intention of the legislation,” states Phil Morlock, Government Affairs Chair of the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association. “The implications of this Bill are chilling. It is a nuclear strike against our outdoor heritage activities and threatens anyone who just wants to take their kids fishing.”

In a classic example of the relentless ‘under the radar’ attacks on the eight million Canadians who enjoy fishing, this Bill copies the same contentious phrasing that directly threatens anglers and which appeared in seven previous government Bills from 1999 – 2008. That legislation had strong support from M.P. Mark Holland who is now Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Democratic Institutions, Maryam Monsef MP for Peterborough-Kawartha. Mr. Holland was quoted in the November 30, 2015 issue of The Hill Times newspaper as once again drafting similar ‘animal cruelty’ legislation.

“We’re urging all Canadian anglers who enjoy the freedom of fishing with their families without fear of prosecution to contact their Member of Parliament to express their opposition to Bill C-246,” added Morlock.

Anglers can access the contact information of their Member of Parliament by visiting www.keepcanadafishing.com.

The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) represents the manufacturers, distributors, retailers and sales agencies which serve the 8 million Canadians who spend over \$8 billion dollars annually enjoying the outdoor heritage activity of recreational fishing.