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MINISTERS SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON GATT REGULATIONS ON BRITISH COLUMBIA SALMON AND HERRING

International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Tom Siddon announced today that there is no foundation to allegations that the United States intends to retaliate against Canada on the GATT (General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade) salmon and herring issues.

"The existing regulations will remain in place until the Canadian Government's new GATT consistent regulations to ensure effective conservation, quality control, and management over the west coast fisheries are brought into force," explained Mr. Siddon. "The federal government has been consulting closely with all interested parties - processors, unions, fishermen and the B.C. government so that new regulations can be put in place."

"This issue has nothing to do with the Free Trade Agreement which, of course, is not yet even in place," said Mr. Crosbie. The need for new regulations results from a GATT panel decision last March that existing restrictions on the export of unprocessed fish were not consistent with Canada's international obligations under the GATT.

The FTA creates no new rights or obligations in this matter and gives the U.S. no new powers to enforce their claims before the GATT.

"This is a GATT matter, pure and simple, and attempts to link it to the FTA are wrong. Those who are spreading these allegations are doing so for partisan political reasons. Our obligation is to put in place GATT consistent regulations that could not be successfully challenged by the United States," said Mr. Siddon.

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