

Trouble brewing if Royal Greenland doesn't start buying crab from under 40: SEA-NL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, May 29th — Seaward Enterprises Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (SEA-NL) says enterprise owners in the under 40' fleet warn there will be trouble if Quin-Sea/Royal Greenland doesn't start buying snow crab from them, and processing companies are not reined in.

“Forget tie-up, someone could be strung up,” says Ryan Cleary, SEA-NL's Executive Director. “The 2023 crab dispute is not over yet, and tensions will boil over unless the union stands up for its members, and the provincial government supports small-boat fishermen against the foreign country trying to drive them under.”

The FFAW-Unifor ended the snow crab tie-up on May 19th after agreeing to the same \$2.20/lb that processors had offered six weeks earlier.

However, Quin-Sea/Royal Greenland, which runs the snow crab plant in Old Perican, has refused to buy from possibly hundreds of boats in the under 40' fleet until as late as June 11th.

The company has not explained its actions, but bigger boats in the over 40' fleet are reportedly load and go.

Smaller boat fishermen suspect Quin-Sea/Royal Greenland blames them for the tie-up, and the decision not to buy from them is in retaliation.

Since the tie-up ended processing companies have also lifted the 20% tolerance for smaller legal size crab with an under 4" carapace — a rule that had been supported by Fisheries and Oceans for years to avoid high-grading.

Harvesters are paid \$1.90/lb for under 4" crab, with the tolerance now reduced to zero.

Fishing schedules and trip limits are also enforced against the smaller boat fleet — raising the issue of safety at sea. One owner-operator said Sunday his processor finally told him he could go ahead and fish today (May 29th) — when the marine forecast was calling for 35-knot winds — or wait 8-9 days for the next trip.

“That's a recipe for disaster that's condoned by the union, processing companies, and the provincial government,” Cleary said. “If anything happens there will be blood on all hands.”