

The Perils Of Co Management

Partnerships and their agreements are usually designed to protect each partner from the other. Each partnership contract agreement sets out the guidelines as to what part each party will play, pay, or contribute to this partnership. These agreements are usually in consultation of a lawyer who then explains the possible consequences of this agreement. It would not be likely that a partnership agreement would ever be signed where one of the partners dictated to the other.

There have been a number of co management associations created for which the government claims cooperation with the fishing industry. Though this gives the industry the belief that they are somehow playing a part in the economic benefit, and protection of the resource, these associations have little or no control over the consequences of their fate. It is generally the government partner that makes the rules. These partnership agreements have effectively created a direct tax on the members, or partners of these associations. Where as it is the federal governments responsibility to manage the fisheries resource, for the benefit of all Canadian citizens, it has created a vehicle for the federal government to pass the costs on to the Province and in particular the partners.

The government makes the rules, to which their partner associations and there members are required to adhere, including the costs of research and various other expenses incurred by and for the management of resources. The government attaches a tax, in the form of a levy of a pound of quota, which then becomes the capital to manage, but the government sets the rules for what the association will pay and to whom. When the bureaucracy increases the bureaucracy through government contracts, these associations or their members pick up the tab. Some of these co management associations have set the fees far above the costs, which have been held as member's equity. The government and their bureaucracies are now spending the members money by changing policies, and passing the increasing expenses on to their co-management members. One could almost compare this to cancer

Regardless of those association members attempts to remain healthy, this cancer keeps spreading, increasingly devouring the economic benefits to these partners. The fishing industry is not un-typical of the ever-increasing costs, and incredible inefficiencies created through government bureaucracies. As long as we collectively or individually accept the principles of the use of our money for poor management, these inefficiencies will continue to erode our economy.

In addition to the costs, the responsibility of a particular outcome can now be placed on the association, or it's representatives. The recent Integrated Fishing Plan is an example of tremendous costs, of complicated inefficient management, most of which is paid by the association partners. The members of these associations and or their representatives in the processes of industry advise, now have to resume the responsibility for the institution of these programs and their costs. If members of these associations, have misrepresented industry, or have benefited personally from their advice, they risk liability.

Though the government is supposedly elected to represent the people of Canada, one would question how they could justify the inefficiencies and the waste of public funds. One could also question if government themselves are run by their employees. These employees, who would actually include any group to which government donates money, contracts, or financial incentives with taxpayer's money, can then dictate government policy. When government signs on to an agreement of such a complicated, redundant and inequitable consequence, as the Integrated Fishing Plan, which does little to achieve it's purpose, at the request of DFO and a few representatives of industry and the government funded environmental groups and place the expense on the Industry, it breaches all the principles of government and constitutional obligations.

It's time to re-evaluate the principles of co management; it's purpose and responsibility.