

FAXED
April 30
2009

April 29, 2009

GL-42324

Honourable Celine Hervieux-Payette
Senator
Bureau 371-E Centre
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Dear Senator:

It is my great pleasure to write you and confirm my support for your *Universal Declaration on the Ethical Harvest of Seals*. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to working with the sealing community to ensure a responsible and respectful seal harvest continues to thrive for years to come.

Through international cooperation, such as your "*We Care*" initiative, we can ensure the highest standards of animal welfare practices are upheld in the worldwide seal harvest. In recent meetings with Ambassadors for European Union member states, I have stated that the Province is prepared to open dialogue on sealing practices and demonstrate its humane harvesting methods and sustainability through a certification process.

International protests and trade bans only seek to end commercial utilization of a renewable resource and put in danger the welfare of seals, the ecosystem, and the livelihoods of coastal communities that have relied on this resource for generations.

As we continue to be faced with this misguided opposition, it is imperative that we take action to raise awareness of our commitment to a humane and sustainable seal harvest. Your initiative in formulating the strategy to develop this *Universal Declaration on the Ethical Harvest of Seals* is most appreciated.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration on this most vital issue.

Sincerely,



TOM HEDDERSON, MHA
Harbour Main
Minister