

Media advisory – for immediate release

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Federal Search and Rescue Funding Ignores Coast-Line Monitors, Union says

(Toronto) Federal improvements to Canada's search and rescue capabilities announced recently by National Defence Minister Peter MacKay completely ignores the country's vital marine communications and traffic control services, said CAW Local 2182 President Chad Stroud.

On May 2, the minister announced new money and a slate of new policies to improve Canada's search and rescue system, including millions of dollars for satellites and a review of the system that is to be done every four years, but failed to change course with cuts to the Canadian Coast Guard.

"It's encouraging to see the federal government add new monies for search and rescue, but why push forward on plans to drastically reduce Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres across the country?" said Stroud, who represents 350 MCTS officers.

"These officers are the first-line of defence in the search and rescue process -the eyes and ears of Canada's coastal waters - but they're getting shuffled aside by the federal government."

In 2012, the Canadian Coast Guard announced the closure of 10 MCTS centres, including those located in St. John's and St. Anthony, Newfoundland, Saint John, New Brunswick., Rivière au Renard and Montréal, Quebec, Tofino, Vancouver and Comox, B.C., Thunder Bay, Ontario, as well as Inuvik, N.W.T.

Closures were announced as part of the Harper government's federal department budgetary cutbacks. The union has called on the federal government to reverse the Coast Guard cuts.

"When mariners run into trouble and radio for help, they're calling us. And after these closures take full effect, there will be fewer of us to heed those calls," Stroud said.

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