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Coastal communities look to federal budget to restore coast guard cuts

OTTAWA, April 20, 2015 /CNW/ - Coastal communities from Parksville to Placentia are watching tomorrow's federal budget closely for funding to restore the cuts to coast guard services that have closed bases across the country, putting communities at risk.

"Our communities rely on the coast guard. Seconds matter when there's an emergency, but Prime Minister Harper is gutting our coast guard services," said Keith Sullivan, President of Unifor's Fish, Food, and Allied Workers (FFAW).

First announced in 2012, the Harper government's cuts to the marine safety network have impacted services on both coasts. Two bases have already closed on Canada's east coast. Six more bases are scheduled to close this year: Uclulet, Thunder Bay, Rivière au Renard, St. Anthony, Vancouver, and Comox.

"Oil spills and Mayday calls should not be taken lightly," said Chad Stroud, President of Unifor Local 2182, the union representing coast guard communication officers. "Harper's coast guard cuts may be endangering lives and wildlife on our coasts."

Restoring funding to the coast guard would cost \$5.5 million per year, or 0.25% of the cost to the government of the income-splitting program introduced in 2015.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector, representing more than 305,000 workers. It was formed Labour Day weekend 2013 when the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers unions merged.

SOURCE Unifor

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