

Newfoundland lobbies EU over seal hunt

by UPI

OTTAWA -- Ministers of the eastern Canadian province of Newfoundland are lobbying European Union officials in Ottawa to drop opposition to the annual seal hunt.

Leading the delegation is provincial Fisheries Minister Tom Hedderson, who says Canada's federal Conservative government should support efforts to protect the world's largest seal hunt, CTV News reported.

An EU vote is scheduled by the third week of April on whether to ban the import of seal products from any country, which would hurt 6,000 Newfoundland/Labrador sealers' reliant on the province's \$30-million sealing industry, the report said.

"We feel strongly that we need a stronger presence from the federal government," Hedderson told the broadcaster. "We are in the 11th hour, we want them to pull out all the stops."

Animal rights activists have long decried the hunt, which involves shooting or clubbing baby seals for their pelts. The Canadian quota for this ongoing hunt is 280,000 harp seals out of a herd of more than 5.5 million, the report said.

There was no immediate indication the federal government would back up Newfoundland's EU lobbying and take the issue to the World Trade Organization, the report said.

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