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## Minister Thibault Confirms Enforcement of Vessel Length Policy in LFAs 33 and 34

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**Halifax, N.S.** - The Honourable Robert G. Thibault, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, today confirmed that the vessel length policy used in the lobster fishery will be enforced during the 2004-2005 fishing season in Lobster Fishing Areas (LFA) 33 and 34.

The policy stipulates that fishers must use vessels under 45' or 13.7 meters in length in these lobster fishing areas. In recent years some fishermen have constructed out-of-water stern extensions to their vessels. These extensions may be permitted provided that the maximum total extended length does not exceed 1.5 meters (5 feet).

This announcement follows the advice of the Advisory Committees for Lobster Fishing Areas 33 and 34. The Advisory Committee for LFA 34 conducted a survey of licence holders to arrive at their recommendation. The vast majority of respondents supported the size restriction.

"After listening to the fishing industry, I feel that we must take reasonable steps to resolve the issue of fishers using vessels that are not in compliance with the policy," stated Minister Thibault. "The announcement today is to ensure that the fishing industry understands that DFO will enforce these restrictions."

A detailed document explaining how the vessel replacement rules will be applied will be prepared to ensure that they are explicit and clearly understood by all participants.

The policy will be enforced through an amendment to the conditions of licence issued to lobster fishers for the fall 2004 and spring 2005 lobster fishing season.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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