



IFAW condemns Canadian WTO Challenge on EU ban of seal products

2 November 2009

(Yarmouth Port, USA) - Today, Canada has formally requested consultations at the World Trade Organization. This attempt to overthrow the EU seal product ban was met with derision today by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW – www.ifaw.org).

“Apparently the sky’s the limit when it comes to bailing out special interests like commercial seal clubbing. Canadian politicians seem to have no problem spending \$10 million in tax payer dollars in a desperate attempt to save a dying \$1 million industry” said Sheryl Fink, Senior Researcher with the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Statistics from a Department of Fisheries and Oceans report shows that the landed value of the 2009 seal hunt was the lowest in recent memory.

Tax payer dollars aren’t the only thing the Canadian government is willing to risk to secure this WTO challenge. Shockingly, the Canadian government is refusing to ban the importation of cat and dog fur into Canada in fears that this politically motivated WTO challenge would be jeopardized.

The announcement also is in stark contrast to Canadian public opinion. According to a public opinion poll conducted by Environics Research in September 2009, 73% of Canadians say the EU should be able to restrict trade in seal products, if it chooses to do so.

“The EU seal ban is the only way the European public can be assured they are not buying products of cruel commercial seal hunts. Canada is arrogantly trying to shove dead seals into markets where they are simply not wanted” said Fink.

The majority of Canadians disapprove of the federal government challenging the EU ban on seal products at the WTO, and two-thirds believe that even if Canada wins a WTO challenge against the EU ban, the commercial seal hunt is doomed.

“The Canadian government continues to bring shame upon our country on the international stage” continued Fink. “It’s time this government stopped catering to special interest lobby groups and stood up for the majority of Canadians who oppose Canada’s commercial seal hunt.”

For media-related inquiries, contact:

Katie McConnell (IFAW-HQ) Tel: 1 (508) 744-2237 Email: kmccconnell@ifaw.org

Sheryl Fink (IFAW- Canada) Tel: 1 (519) 830-0046 Email: sfink@ifaw.org