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News Release

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DFO Parliamentary Secretary, the Island Coastal Economic Trust and Mayor Gerry Furney Announce a \$7.8M waterfront development Project at Port McNeill

Port McNeill, B.C. –A \$7.8 million dollar project to expand and develop Port McNeill’s waterfront was announced today by Randy Kamp, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Mayor Roger McDonell, representing W.J. (Jack) Peake, Chair, on behalf of the Island Coastal Economic Trust and Gerry Furney, Mayor of the Municipality of Port McNeill. Colin Hansen, B.C. Minister of Economic Development, was present at the announcement to bid good wishes to the Town of Port McNeill in the development of its waterfront.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Island Coastal Economic Trust and the Municipality of Port McNeill are working together to fund the project, which will significantly improve the usability of the Port McNeill Harbour and allow for a greater number of visiting recreational, commercial fishing and industry vessels. As well the project will create a new public park and aims to create a prominent social centre for the town on its waterfront.

During the peak season the Port McNeill harbour is often filled to capacity. To meet the moorage needs of the fishing and recreational fleets, \$2 million, the DFO portion of the project under its Small Craft Harbours program, will be used to repair the existing rock breakwater, install a new floating wharf and increase moorage space.

“Our government understands that Port McNeil needs safe and functional harbour facilities to help the community have a bright economic future,” said Mr. Kamp. “Our government is proud to play a significant role in helping Port McNeil work towards its vision of being the marine transportation hub for the North Island.”

The Island Coastal Economic Trust’s \$3.5 million contribution will help the Town of Port McNeill redevelop its municipal harbour including the expansion of the breakwater, construction of additional floats, and public upland development that incorporates a tourism visitor centre and the harbour operations office. “We believe that the Trust’s support will kick-start the project quickly and help to diversify the economic base of Port McNeill,” said Roger McDonell, Mayor of Campbell River, ICET board member, representing Jack Peake, Chair, on behalf of the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

In addition to upgrading the waterfront to better serve the growing demand for harbour facilities, the project seeks to create a more significant social centre for the town. The relocation of the town’s tourism visitor centre to a higher-profile waterfront location, as well as the availability of new and expanded park and other public spaces on the waterfront will help provide a focal point for the working harbour and provide enhanced green space for the benefit of the community.

“I am very proud of the significant work done by our Council, our Harbour Commission and our staff on this project,” said Mayor Gerry Furney. “We have had great support from both levels of government and the staff and Board of the Island Coastal Economic Trust. We look forward to the many benefits that this great project will bring to our community and the North Island.”

The federal portion of the harbour improvements will be implemented by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, as part of its Small Craft Harbours Program, in cooperation with the local harbour authority that manages and operates the facility for the benefit of local users. This close cooperation with clients allows the federal government to continue to provide an operable system of harbours and facilities throughout Canada in support of commercial fish harvesters.

The Government of Canada understands the importance of small craft harbours to communities across the country. Since February 2006, the permanent annual funding for the Small Craft Harbours program has been increased by \$20 million, with a further \$10 million commitment made in Budget 2008 over two years for repairs and environmental cleanup at recreational and non-core fishing harbours to permit the transfer of these harbours to interested parties.

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