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MONCTON, N.B. -
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Atlantic chiefs still willing to talk with Ottawa

The lawyer for aboriginal bands in Atlantic Canada wants to meet with lawyers for the federal government.

'The chiefs are not happy with the agreement'
Bruce Wildsmith says the two sides have to work out a fishing deal that will protect aboriginal treaty rights. He says Ottawa's latest offer isn't good enough.

Chief Second Peter Barlow says a deal is better than chaos on the water.

"We want Canada and Minister Dhaliwal to hear that we are serious and committed to finding a solution to avoid conflict in the water and in the courts," he says.

The interim deals signed last year by most of the bands run out at the end of March. Bruce Wildsmith says he wants to meet with federal lawyers in the next two days.

"The chiefs are not happy with the agreement and that's why they want myself and department of justice lawyers to try to work out clauses that will achieve our mutual objectives," he says.

Wildsmith says the latest proposals by Ottawa don't go far enough to protect aboriginal treaty rights. He says he is also concerned Ottawa will use these deals to put pressure on any band that refuses to sign.

The chiefs say they didn't like the way Ottawa pressured the Burnt Church and Indian Brook First Nations last year and they don't want any new deals to be used against those bands.