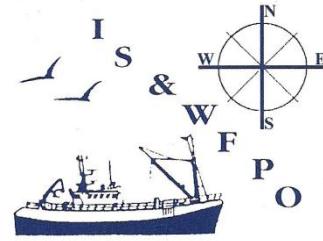


*Irish South and West
Fish Producers' Organisation Ltd.*



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PRESS RELEASE

Board of Directors of the Irish South & West fish Producers Organisation Ltd. (IS&WFPO Ltd.) respond to the MCIB Report on MFV "Tit Bonhomme" Tragedy

At a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the **Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO)** at which a majority of those present were Skippers with expertise of fishing in the Union Hall area, the Report of the MCIB investigation in relation to the "Tit Bonhomme" tragedy was discussed.

The Board agreed that the recommendation of the MCIB Report in relation to the installation of Bridge Navigation Watchkeeping Alarm Systems on board fishing vessels should be implemented and the Irish Fishing Industry have recommended this action be taken for a number of years.

However, the Board questioned the conclusion of the Report that crew fatigue was the main cause factor of the accident. The MCIB themselves acknowledge in the report "*In the circumstances, it is difficult to ascertain accurately the crew rest period arrangements during the trip*". Based on the information provided in the report of 5 tows over a 39 hour periods and a catch of approximately 42 boxes using the experience of the those present at the Board meeting it would appear that the crew would have had at a minimum the statutory rest periods required under the European Community (Workers on board sea-going fishing Vessels) Organisation of Working Time) Regulations, 2003 (S.I. 709 of 2003).

"As part of the Marine Survey Office Code of Compliance, which every vessel must adhere to, every Skipper is aware of his obligations in relation to crew rest periods" said Eibhlin O'Sullivan, CEO of the IS&WFPO. **"Michael Hayes, RIP, who was well known by many members of the Board was a highly qualified Skipper as is evidenced by the MCIB Report which states that he was the holder of a Second Hand Special Certificate of Competency No. 582 together with additional qualifications and evidenced considerable leadership and bravery during the incident as demonstrated by the survivors account of his distributing lifejackets to the crew following the grounding of the vessel."**

Ends

9th April 2013.