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Media Release

EDS cautiously welcomes Precision Seafood Harvesting

The Environmental Defence Society has cautiously welcomed a proposed new technology for commercial fishing.

The so-called *Precision Seafood Harvesting* project has developed a potential replacement for the traditional trawl net. The project is a joint venture between the Primary Growth Partnership and the seafood industry and was announced at a Seafood Conference yesterday by Sanford's CEO Eric Barratt.

"This new method of fishing claims benefits that if realised should reduce the environmental impacts of trawling," said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

"It involves a specially designed flexible PVC liner that brings fish on board still swimming in water.

"The design of the liner claims benefits that include reduced by-catch, a major problem with nets, and greater ability to target preferred species. In addition, fish are landed alive. That should create more value out of a higher quality product without increasing the volume of catch.

"Clearly there is some distance to go before the technology is fully proven and deployed. At this stage we can say that it looks good and if it works as claimed will be an important step forward for the industry.

"Retailers and their customers are keen to see more sustainable fishing practices and this initiative shows the industry is up to that challenge.

"We look forward to seeing more about the viability of the technology as the research project continues," Mr Taylor concluded.