

FOOD & ALLIED WORKERS' UNION



MEDIA STATEMENT

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F.A.W.U. Commends Intervention Of The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment To Increase Sardine Total Allowable Catch (TAC) Quotas Savings Thousands of Fishing Jobs

The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), a proud affiliate of the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), welcomes and celebrates the decision by the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Willie Aucamp, to increase the sardine Total Allowable Catch (TAC) quota west of Cape Agulhas by 6,000 tonnes. This critical decision moves the allocation from 30,500 tonnes to 36,500 tonnes. It comes as an immense relief to thousands of factory workers, vessel crews, and coastal communities in the small pelagic fishing sector whose livelihoods were being threatened by the limitations of the previous TAC quotas.

FAWU's Request For Intervention To Increase TAC

In February of 2026, FAWU formally requested the Ministry to intervene in the deepening crisis within the Small Pelagic Fishing Industry. Commercial fishing operations west of Cape Agulhas were rapidly exhausting their existing sardine quotas due to localized shortages. This shortage threatened reduced shifts and resulted in a loss of income for vulnerable seasonal workers at Lucky Star, Amawandle Pelagic, Westpoint Processors and Pioneer Fishing where our members are employed.

The ministry's impactful intervention to convert existing sardine Total Allowable Catch has averted an imminent socio-economic catastrophe.

FAWU's Efforts To Protect Livelihoods and Economies In Coastal Towns

For FAWU this is fundamentally a workers' issue, a food security issue, and an economic survival issue.

- The impact of the increase will directly protect more than 3 000 jobs and livelihoods across the fishing value chain;
- The adjusted quotas provide processing factories such as those in Velddrif and surrounding West Coast plants with stability to maintain consistent production schedules and provide stable operational income to families through the remainder of the 2026 season;

- The TAC adjustment will now ensure that coastal towns and their economies which depend entirely on the small pelagic sector can keep factories running and prevent local economies from collapsing.

FAWU Calls for Meaningful and Transparent Consultation

While FAWU applauds the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) for acting with unprecedented speed to protect jobs, we reiterate our call for continuous, transparent consultation with labour and small-scale fishers. Managing our ocean's natural bounty must always strike a fair balance between scientific environmental preservation and the socioeconomic dignity of the working class.

FAWU will monitor the implementation of this increased allocation closely to ensure that employers pass this operational relief directly down to the factory floor through guaranteed shifts, fair treatment, and protected employment.

For More Information, please call Deputy General Secretary Edwin Mabowa on 082 4444 621 or alternatively Western Cape Provincial Secretary Zolani Mbanjwa - 082 494 7940. Released By FA.W.U. Media Liaison Officer Dominique Martin - 082 498 5631
