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## Where's the Enforcement? Asks the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association

*Peterborough, ON:* The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) is calling on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to enforce the anti harassment laws under the Fish and Wildlife Act to protect all anglers who are fishing legally.

CSIA President Kim Rhodes said the members of the Association are very concerned about recent attacks against Asian-Canadian anglers in Ontario. "No angler, regardless of their race, should feel threatened while enjoying recreational fishing," states Rhodes. "There are mechanisms in place under the Fish and Wildlife Act to ensure the safety of all anglers who are fishing legally. We feel that the proper enforcement of current laws will send a clear message that the outdoor community will not tolerate such harassment," states Rhodes. "If that means more funding is needed to increase the presence of Conservation Officers on the front lines, then the MNR needs to address that."

There have been reports of Asian-Canadian anglers being accosted and assaulted without having done anything to provoke the attacks. Ontario Human Rights Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall's opinion is that the reported incidents are linked by an undercurrent of racism and she's appealing for other victims to come forward.

"While we don't have firsthand knowledge that there was an undercurrent of racism in the reported attacks, we do know that a strong presence by MNR law enforcement and the use of its powers to lay charges will go a long way to make all anglers feel safe on the water," added Rhodes.

In addition to calling for stronger enforcement of current laws, the CSIA is hoping the Ontario Human Rights Inquiry will result in better communication among all anglers about the rules and regulations as they relate to the fishery. CSIA has repeatedly asked Ontario MNR to publish fishing regulation summaries in multiple languages to facilitate this.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Mike Melnik at Impact Communications at 705-750-1286 or 1-888-296-8978.