

St. John's fur company to seal deal with N.L.

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The Newfoundland and Labrador government is working with a St. John's fur company to try to improve the market for seal pelts.

Fisheries Minister Darin King says he met with Vogue Furriers Limited owner Bernie Halleran recently.

"Bernie is off to Montreal to a show in a couple of weeks or so and got very strong indication of great demand for his product. So, things are still very positive in spite of the current local challenges that we face," he said.

The provincial government is giving Halleran money for the trip.

King said this year's hunt is picking up after a slow start.

He said that, as of Monday, about 80 boats had landed more than 20,000 seals.

King said there is still great demand for seals in China and Russia, even though Russia has officially banned seal products

The Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus have ban the products. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has publicly called the hunt "a bloody industry that should have been stopped years ago."

Millions to boost industry

The Newfoundland and Labrador government is also providing a \$3.6-million loan for the purchase of raw material to boost this year's seal hunt.

"Our government is providing financial support for the seal-processing industry in order to protect the future viability of the province's seal hunt," King said recently.

Carino Processing Limited will get the money to purchase seal pelts and blubber or fat.

The government said the company will make a matching contribution for processing and marketing activities.