



Aquaculture Regulations 2015

New Regulations Respecting Licences and Leases

The Province of Nova Scotia has recently released a major modernization of its regulatory framework for the management and development of the aquaculture industry. A key aspect of these reforms has been the development of a new aquaculture licence and lease application process. There will now be three potential avenues for acquiring aquaculture lease spaces in Nova Scotia: a licence and lease for a marine site, an application for a licence and a lease on a reallocated site and an application for a licence for a land based operation. Each process is unique and is described in more detail below.



New Marine Sites

To encourage better dialogue between the proponent and local stakeholders in the siting and design of an aquaculture project, the Province now requires proponents to acquire an Option from the Minister to pursue a lease in a defined area. A request for an Option to Lease will require the completion of a short proposal that may be solicited by the Minister in a competitive 'Call for Proposals' process or simply accepted in an unsolicited, non-competitive process. In both instances, the acceptance or rejection of the proposal will be based on established criteria and the proposed activity's alignment with current provincial policy. Once an Option to Lease has been issued, the proponent will be required to initiate a scoping exercise that engages local stakeholders and includes at least one public meeting that will help inform their final application. When the scoping is complete and a site has been identified, the proponent must submit a complete application package that will include a detailed development plan as well as a scoping document. The approval or rejection of a lease application will be governed by a defined process with the decision being made by an Independent Aquaculture Review Board.

Reallocated Sites

New legislation allows the Province to maintain a registry of terminated aquaculture sites for potential reallocation to another operator. Before a site is entered into the registry, the site must first undergo a performance review as described in the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations. If the site passes the review, the site will be entered into the Registry and offered to other operators through a competitive Call for Proposals. Proposals will be judged according to established criteria. A successful proponent will have the exclusive right to apply for the site. The site can only be used for the purpose for which it was originally approved.

Land Based Sites

Individuals wishing to conduct aquaculture on private property only require a license from the Province. Applicants must submit a complete application form and a development plan for an Administrative decision. The approval or rejection of the application is made by the Administrator and will be governed by a defined process that includes an opportunity for public comment.

Advanced Planning

Government recognizes the benefits of greater upfront planning to identify areas suitable for aquaculture that are compatible with the environment and other users. The new regulations provide several mechanisms to promote proactive planning, including an Option to lease, creation of an aquaculture development area and determination of unsuitable areas. The Province is open to working with interested municipalities to explore future aquaculture opportunities.





- In addition, a new regulatory advisory committee was established which:
 - Includes Mi'kmaw representatives and stakeholders such as municipalities, the aquaculture industry and environmental organizations; and tourism, sport fishing and the commercial fishing industry;
 - Provides advice to the Minister on the implementation of the regulatory framework and will help with the continuing improvement of regulations.

A newly created science committee provides a forum for ongoing discussion of the science of aquaculture and includes experts from the fields of oceanography, ecology, aquatic animal health and finfish and shellfish aquaculture.

Transparency

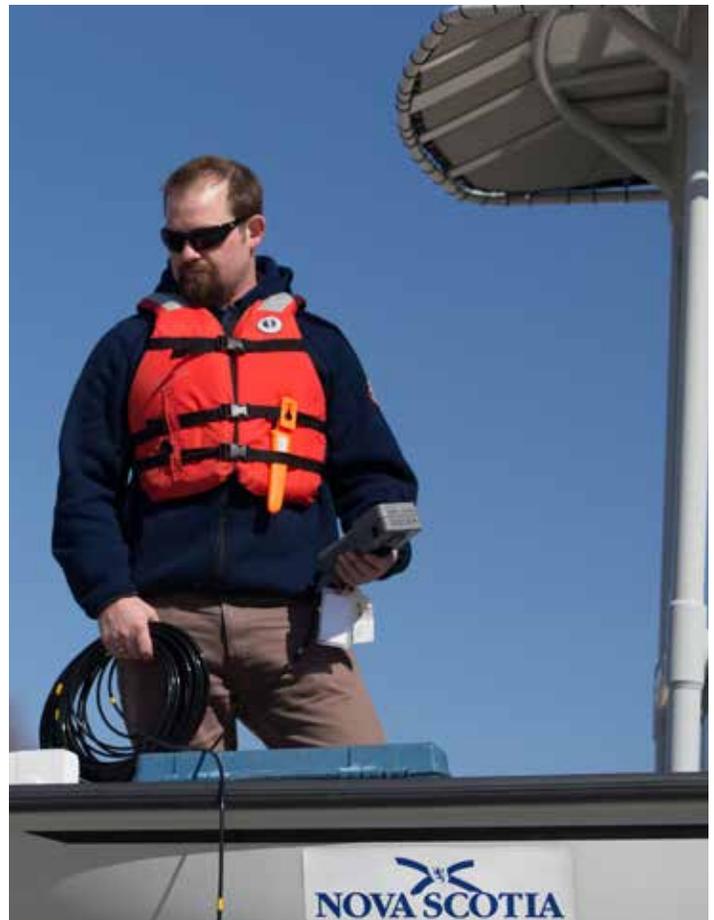
- The public can be kept-up-to-date on the status of a site by visiting novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/public.
- More routine and proactive release of information on the aquaculture website for items such as new licences, leases and renewals.
- Public notification when an Option for a new lease has been given.

Public Participation and Transparency

We're moving into a new era for how government handles aquaculture development with a modernized approach that is built on the principles of transparency and accountability. These regulations contain new checks and balances to ensure that new aquaculture development happens where it makes sense based on the scientific evidence. There are now more opportunities for public input regarding licence and lease decisions. Nova Scotians will have access to information on fish health, environmental monitoring and decisions on licensing and leasing. For a copy of the regulations go to novascotia.ca/just/regulations.

Greater Public Participation

- The changes will provide a higher level of public input than ever before in aquaculture in Nova Scotia including:
 - Public submissions for all licence and lease renewals, assignments, administrative amendments, and issuances of reallocated,
 - Mandatory scoping sessions (with public meetings) to provide early stage opportunity for public input into new marine sites,
 - Time for the general public to speak during adjudicative hearings for new marine sites.



Greater Accountability and More Prosperity

In order to support a viable and balanced approach that provides for environmentally stable practices and economic growth, the regulations have been overhauled and increased to address significant gaps. This will bring greater clarity and improve the process for approvals for businesses who want to invest in Nova Scotia. The way we identify, monitor and manage risks is being strengthened so that Nova Scotians can be confident that this industry is operating in an environmentally sustainable and accountable way. Aquaculture in Nova Scotia is an established and growing industry that is becoming an increasingly important economic contributor to rural regions in the province. The responsible growth of the industry will require careful consideration for the environment and the important socioeconomic impacts for residents, businesses and communities. The aquaculture industry has the potential to attract economic growth in communities where it makes sense based on scientific evidence.

Accountability

- Greater opportunity for public comment through the licensing process (scoping sessions, adjudicative hearings and more).
- More routine and proactive release of information on the aquaculture website for information of interest to the public at novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture.
- A focus on fact-based decision-making through an Independent Aquaculture Review Board that will review and approve all applications for marine sites.
- A modern and clear approach to administrative decisions such as renewals and reallocating of existing sites that will promote transparent and effective decision making.
- Separating responsibility for compliance and enforcement from the work of developing the industry.
- Encouraging businesses to actively engage with communities and support their social and economic development.

More prosperity

- Aquaculture is the fastest-growing source of animal protein production in the world today.
- Farmed fish production now exceeds beef production globally.
- The aquaculture industry was worth more than \$60 million in Nova Scotia in 2014.
- It directly employed 606 men and women in full- and part-time positions.
- At present, there are 146 active aquaculture farms, 111 shellfish, 13 marine finfish and 22 land based facilities.
- Aquaculture offers employment opportunities on ocean farms, freshwater hatcheries, processing plants, offices, labs, feed mills, net and cage building and maintenance as well as supply and service areas.
- The aquaculture workforce is young, with many of the workers under the age of 40.

Enforcement

- Independent compliance and enforcement by the Department of Environment separates it from the work of developing the industry.
- More comprehensive regulations make expectations clear for the industry and the public.
- Compliance is strengthened with new Summary Offense Tickets.
- A clear way for the public to raise concerns through the Department of Environment's toll free line at 1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476).