

**Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
April 13th, 2:30- 4:30 Prince George Hotel/Hybrid Meeting**

Attendees:

Co-Chair Deputy Minister, April Howe
Co-Chair Chief Paul, Membertou
Bruce Hancock, Executive Director of Aquaculture
Carla Buchan, Director of Aquaculture
Aaron MacMullin, Senior Corporate Policy Strategist
Wura Eytayo-Oyesode, Manager of Policy & Corporate Services
Stewart Lamont, Tangier Lobster LTD.
Bruce Morrison, Warden of Victoria County
Carl Purcell, Nova Scotia Salmon Association
Jeff Nickerson, Cooke Aquaculture
Tom Smith, Aquaculture Association
Edgar Samson, Premium Seafoods
Lloyd Robicheau, Lobster Harvester
Orlando Fraser, Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
Shannon Arnold, Ecology Action Centre
Councillor Carol Ann Potter, Bear River First Nation
Dr. David Gray, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie Agricultural Campus
Lisa Dahr, Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
Paul Budreski, Aqua Delights Seafood Ltd.

Regrets:

Edgar Samson, Premium Seafoods
Councillor Carol Ann Potter, Bear River First Nation

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chairs Chief Paul and Deputy Howe opened the meeting with a welcome, land and African Nova Scotian acknowledgement.

Deputy Howe emphasized that the day's meeting is an important kickoff to the aquaculture regulatory review.

Approval of Previous Meeting Summary:

Approval of the meeting summary for Dec 13th, 2021. The decision to approve the meeting summary was deferred to the next meeting to allow members to review it in more detail.

After committee members introduced themselves, the Davis Pier Project Team leads Jennifer McGill and Emi Froud introduced themselves and highlighted the work of Davis Pier.

Presentations by Davis Pier on Aquaculture Regulatory Review Project Plan

Davis Pier presented the project plan and timeline to the committee for feedback. Davis Pier highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement, the mandate of the committee, the project timeline, and the importance of enhancing the regulations for a sustainable and prosperous industry. Davis Pier was transparent with the committee in that they are not aquaculture experts, however, they have experience in regulatory reviews.

Committee members asked for clarity on the committee's roles in the review, and the importance of following the mandate of the committee. It was shared that it is the responsibility of the consultant to engage with key stakeholders and to ultimately make regulatory recommendations, which the committee will provide feedback on, and the committee co-chairs will make the final recommendations to the Minister. Committee members were satisfied with the clarification and reminded of the mandate of the committee.

There was a discussion about the project team's experience in aquaculture. Davis Pier emphasized that although they are not experts in aquaculture, they have a proven record with all levels of government in regulatory reviews. Davis Pier stressed that their systematic approach to regulatory reviews will be an asset, as will the fact that they are non-bias and have no preconceptions of the industry.

Committee members were interested in the proposed approach and recommended that the project team visit an aquaculture site to gain an understanding of what aquaculture is about. Deputy Howe supported the idea of a site visit and stressed how seeing a site, and its operations, and gaining an understanding of what farmers do is a wonderful experience and encouraged the project team to do a tour. Committee members expressed support for site visits and suggested that a visit be arranged for committee members as well. A committee member noted visits to communities would also be beneficial.

It was suggested by members that a shared portal where members can share documents and ideas on the review would improve efficiency. It was agreed that Department staff explore the feasibility of this approach.

There was a discussion around the timeline of the review. Davis Pier informed the committee that the goal is to have recommendations for review by July. Committee members expressed that this project is important and should not be rushed. Deputy Howe agreed that quality is very important and that the process must be thorough, but she also reminded the committee that the review of the regulations is a mandate commitment and that it must be completed within a reasonable timeline as well.

There was further discussion around if the Traceability Subcommittee will meet and play a role in the review, and a question as to how the consultations will be conducted. Deputy Howe informed members that she is keen to meet with the Traceability Subcommittee to learn about their work. Davis Pier also shared that those consultations could include various departmental committees, and their approach to consultations is one on one meetings.

Members discussed aquaculture in Nova Scotia and shared varying views on regulations. Members shared that some think Nova Scotia's regulations are world-class while others believe improvements are needed. It was stressed by members that the role of the committee is to focus on continuous improvement of Nova Scotia's aquaculture regulations to meet the mandate of the committee which is to create regulations for a sustainable and prosperous industry.

A committee member asked if current applications received by DFA would be reviewed under the current regulations or future regulations. Department staff confirmed that current applications will be reviewed under current regulations.

Davis Pier shared the regulatory components that will be the focus of the review. Members were satisfied and agreed that the components reflected the scope of the review.

There were questions about the coastal classification project underway at the Department and whether that would play a role in the regulatory review. Staff informed members that coastal classification is separate from the review. The review is on current regulations. It was shared that coastal classification is a significant undertaking and while there is connectivity between the regulatory review and classification, they are separate projects.

Davis Pier shared with members that they have received clear direction that community engagement and public input are an important part of the regulatory review. Davis Pier sought feedback from the committee on their preliminary stakeholder engagement list and if they captured key stakeholders.

Members were satisfied with the list of stakeholders as presented and recognized that the list is growing as more stakeholders are identified. It was indicated that there was not enough time at the meeting for the committee to comment fulsomely and add to the stakeholder engagement list, however, Davis Pier indicated that they would ask committee members to send feedback and potential stakeholders for engagement after the meeting.

It was reiterated by Davis Pier that the project team will attempt to consult with a broad range of stakeholders. Members agreed that stakeholder engagement was a critical part of the process.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Davis Pier completed their presentation and thanked the committee members for their feedback at the first of multiple meetings to come.

Co-Chairs Chief Paul and Deputy Howe expressed appreciation to Davis Pier and encouraged committee members to lean into this important work.

Members discussed meeting frequency and venues capable of hosting hybrid meetings.

Co-Chairs Chief Paul and Deputy Minister Howe closed the meeting. Chief Paul remarked that Nova Scotia has many opportunities and aquaculture is one of them. Not everyone is on board with aquaculture, and we need to listen to and understand their views.

Co-Chairs closed by thanking members for their participation.