

Findings and Decision- Renewal Application of Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd. for AQ#0904

1. Overview:

On October 14, 2015, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA) received an application from Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd. to renew Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0904 (AQ#0904), as described below:

Table 1. Description of Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0904

Type: Marine Shellfish	Size: 8.45 HA
Number: AQ#0904	Cultivation Method: Suspended Cultivation
Applicant: Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd.	Species: Blue mussel, Giant sea scallop, American oyster
Location: Whitehead Harbour, Guysborough County	Proposed Term: 10 year Licence/20 year Lease

2. History

AQ#0904 was first issued to Herbert Harnish on February 14, 1994 for a ten year term (February 14, 1996 to February 14, 2006). AQ#0904 was assigned on June 18, 2011 from Herbert Harnish to 2382144 Nova Scotia Limited. AQ#0904 was amended on October 1, 2002 to allow for the cultivation of blue mussels. AQ#0904 was renewed on February 7, 2006 for a term of five years (February 14, 2006 to February 14, 2011). AQ#0904 was assigned on September 17, 2008 from 2382144 Nova Scotia Limited to Atlantic Aqua Farms Partnership. AQ#0904 was renewed on January 11, 2012 for a five year term (February 14, 2011 to February 13, 2016). AQ#0904 was assigned on February 13, 2014 from Atlantic Aqua Farms Partnership to Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd. AQ#0904 was amended on May 29, 2014 to allow the cultivation of American oyster.

3. Procedure

3.1 Performance Review

A performance review of the information submitted by the operator in support of their renewal application was completed. This review recommended that the site be renewed based on the technical and biological assessment. This performance review is required pursuant to Subsection 72(c) of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations, and was completed on November 6, 2015.

3.2 Public Comment Period

Notice of the application for the renewal of AQ#0904 for the 30-day public comment period was published on NSDFA's website (<http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/public-information/>) for the period of February 3, 2016 to March 3, 2016. Notice of the application was also published in the Royal Gazette Part I on February 3, 2016, February 10, 2016, February 17, 2016, and February 24, 2016.

3.3 Submissions

Zero submissions were received by NSDFA during the 30-day public comment period.

4. Factors to be considered

AQ#0904 is an integral component of the operators plans to incrementally develop a multi-site oyster aquaculture operation in Guysborough County. Records indicate recent employment since the 2014 assignment. The renewal plan indicates continued production is planned for this site and therefore resulting employment. Should the operator not operate the site as indicated, the Department's site utilization review procedures will be triggered. Performance review indicates that successful development of this site will have a positive impact on the local and provincial economy.

The performance review and subsequent public comment period did not note the presence of other fishery activities in the area of the site. There were no ecological concerns identified in the past performance of this site with respect to negative impacts on other fisheries. AQ#0904 is licensed to cultivate shellfish species, and as such there is no evidence that shellfish aquaculture has impacts on the sustainability of wild salmon. The successful growth of blue mussels in Whitehead Harbour is proven; however, the operator intends to grow American oysters on this site. Preliminary results suggest that the environment is conducive to the successful growth of oysters. The information reviewed during the performance review did not indicate adverse impacts on the surrounding public waters.

There are no recorded instances on file of AQ#0904 interfering with other users of the public waters surrounding the operation. AQ#0904 is authorized to cultivate shellfish using suspended gear, and as such the gear must remain within the geographic boundaries of the site. Section 55 of the *Licence and Lease Regulations* requires an aquaculture licence holder to mark each of their sites in a manner determined by the Minister (see below) and keep each site marked during the term of their licence.

AQ#0904 is located approximately 120 metres from the shoreline at its nearest point and is within 500 metres of the nearest aquaculture site (AQ#0613). AQ#0614 is located approximately 1.2 km north of AQ#0904. Thus, the physical separation of AQ#0904 from the shoreline and neighbouring aquaculture sites provides for multiple corridors within the harbour. AQ#0904 is one of eleven shellfish aquaculture sites located within Whitehead Harbour, nine of which are held by Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd. and six others of which are within 2 km of AQ#0904. There is no evidence to suggest that the extent of existing aquaculture in the harbour has exceeded the carrying capacity of the harbour.

5. Decision

Based on the considerations above, Aquaculture Licence #0904 shall be renewed for a period of 10 years (February 14, 2016 to February 14, 2026) and Aquaculture Lease #0904 shall be renewed for a period of 20 years (February 14, 2016 to February 14, 2036).

The Licence and Lease documents shall be prepared in accordance with the standard operating documents of NSDFA, and shall be made publically available subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6. Conditions

In addition, the following condition shall apply:

Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Limited shall adhere to the following site marking requirements:

- a) mark all corners of the leased site with cautionary yellow buoys of a minimum of 60 cm in diameter;
- b) mark all corners of the leased bottom with a cement block or similar device of a weight sufficient to ensure the cement block or device remains in place at all times; and
- c) display the licence or lease number at 1 corner of the licensed or leased area.

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5/3/16

Date