

# Decision on Application to Renew a Marine Aquaculture Licence and Lease

## Application to the Administrator:

On August 25, 2023, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (the “Department”) received an application to renew Aquaculture Licence and Lease No. 1378 (AQ#1378), as described below:

## Application Summary:

<b>Type:</b> Marine	<b>Size:</b> 12.24 HA
<b>Number:</b> AQ#1378	<b>Cultivation Method:</b> Bottom cultivation without gear
<b>Applicant:</b> Chris Strickland, Shelley Strickland	
<b>Location:</b> Merigomish Harbour, Pictou County	<b>Species:</b> American oyster, Bay quahog, Bay scallop
<b>Proposed Term:</b> 10 year Licence / 20 year Lease	

## Site History:

AQ#1378 was first issued on May 14, 2014, for a ten-year term (March 1, 2014 to March 1, 2024). The applicant has also submitted an application on August 25, 2023, to amend the existing licence and lease to authorize the bottom with gear cultivation method and the suspended cultivation method to their currently approved species of shellfish. The amendment application is currently in process at the time of this decision.

## Performance Reviews Conducted by Administrator:

A performance review was conducted on the aquacultural operation of site AQ#1378, pursuant to Sections 71-72 of the *Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations* (the “Regulations”). There were no concerns raised following the performance review.

## Public Submissions on Application to Administrator:

Pursuant to Section 41 of the Regulations, notice of the application was published on the Department’s website and in the Royal Gazette Part I inviting the public to submit written

comments on the application to the Administrator within the 30 days following the date the notice was published. This notice was published on February 8, 2024.

No (0) submissions were received by the Department during the 30-day public comment period.

**Factors to be Considered (as set out in Section 3 of the Regulations):**

*The optimum use of marine resources*

The applicant's development plan, with respect to their currently authorized aquaculture activities, demonstrates an optimum use of marine resources. Review of the file indicates that the site has had minimal production and employment during the tenure of their current licence and lease. In response to their production history, the applicant has submitted an amendment to authorize additional methods of cultivation. A separate decision shall be issued in regards to that amendment application, upon completion of the Department's review and referral to the Administrator. In the meantime, Department staff will continue to monitor that production plans are implemented as submitted and that the site is utilized for Aquaculture.

*The contribution of the proposed operation to community and Provincial economic development*

With respect to the elements of the development plan in support of the application to renew, the applicant has indicated that they are continuing to use local (Provincial) sources of seed. The applicant would need to increase their effort in order to reach their production targets, which, if met, would demonstrate a positive contribution to the community and Provincial economic development. The Department will continue to monitor that production plans are implemented as submitted and that the site is utilized for Aquaculture.

*Fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation*

As this is an application to renew an existing Aquaculture licence and lease, there are no expected novel impacts to the fishery activities in the public waters near the existing site.

*The oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation*

There were no anticipated changes identified in the development plan (with respect to this renewal application) which reflect the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the existing operation. The surrounding area continues to be an approved harvest area under the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program.

*The other users of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation*

As this is an application to renew an existing Aquaculture licence and lease, there are no expected novel impacts to the other users of the public waters near the existing site.

*The public right of navigation*

Specific to this renewal application, there are currently no major or minor works to be installed by the operator. As such there are currently no requirements for approvals under the Canadian Navigable Waters Act. The current activities are not expected to impact the public right of navigation.

*The sustainability of wild salmon*

There is no indication that continued operation of the site for shellfish aquaculture will pose ecological concerns or have an impact on the sustainability of wild salmon.

*The number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation*

Site AQ#1378 is situated along the Southern shoreline of Olding Island, within Merigomish Harbour. The nearest aquaculture site, AQ#1360, starts approximately 40m West along the same shoreline. There are currently a total of 11 issued aquaculture sites within Merigomish Harbour, all of which are authorized for the cultivation of shellfish species. There is no evidence to suggest that the extent of the existing aquaculture in the harbour has exceeded the carrying capacity.

**Decision:**

Based on the factors considered above, Aquaculture Licence #1378 shall be renewed for a period of 10 years (March 2, 2024 to March 1, 2034) and Aquaculture Lease #1378 shall be renewed for a period of 20 years (March 2, 2024 to March 1, 2044).

The Licence and Lease documents shall be prepared in accordance with the Department's standard operating documents and shall be made publicly available subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



Robert Ceschiutti  
Aquaculture Administrator  
Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

March 22, 2024

Date