

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

## Application to the Administrator:

On May 2, 2024, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (the “Department”) received an application to renew Aquaculture Licence and Lease #5001 (AQ#5001), as described below:

## Application Summary:

<b>Type:</b> Marine	<b>Size:</b> 14.24 HA
<b>Number:</b> AQ#5001	<b>Cultivation Method:</b> Bottom cultivation with gear
<b>Applicant:</b> Searise Fisheries Limited	
<b>Location:</b> Three Fathom Harbour, Halifax County	<b>Species:</b> Soft-shell clam
<b>Proposed Term:</b> 1 year Licence / 1 year Lease	

## Site History:

Experimental licence and lease AQ#5001 were first issued on July 28, 2021, for a one-year term (August 2, 2021 to August 1, 2022). The licence and lease were renewed on September 8, 2022, for a second one-year term (August 2, 2022 to August 1, 2023). The licence and lease were renewed on September 27, 2023 for a third one-year term (August 2, 2023 to August 1, 2024).

## Performance Reviews Conducted by Administrator:

A performance review was conducted on the aquacultural operation of site AQ#5001, pursuant to Sections 71-72 of the *Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations* (the “Regulations”). There were no concerns raised following the performance review.

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

### *The optimum use of marine resources*

AQ#5001 is an experimental aquaculture site located in East Three Fathom Harbour, Halifax County. For the proposed renewed tenure (that being the fourth term out of a maximum of five), Searise Fisheries Limited will evaluate the viability of cultivating wild-sourced Soft-shell clam seed through environmental and stock manipulation. As this is an application to renew an

existing Aquaculture licence and lease, there are no expected novel impacts to the use of marine resources, for the tenure of the experiment.

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

The renewal application did not involve any change to Searise Fisheries Limited's services and suppliers and did not involve any change to Searise Fisheries Limited's employment impact to the community. Speaking generally, should the experiment prove successful and identify techniques or approaches that are implemented as part of commercial aquaculture operations, increased Soft-shell clam production should prove beneficial to both the local and Provincial economy and result in increased employment.

*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. AQ#5001 is located in waters which currently remain classified as Restricted by the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP). The Restricted classification requires the operator to harvest product under strict protocols. Soft-shell clams cannot be harvested and sold for human consumption for the duration of the experimental licence and lease unless all Provincial, Federal, and Municipal permits are in place. An example of this would be a Canadian Food Inspection Agency approved depuration plan that utilizes an approved depuration facility. The nature of AQ#5001 being located in Restricted waters continues to limit the impact of AQ#5001 to commercial and recreational harvesters, as such harvesters would not currently be able to access product from this area.

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

There are no anticipated changes identified in the renewal application and supporting documentation which reflect the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the existing site.

*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*

Searise Fisheries Limited is required to adhere to the site marking requirements according to their Notice of Works issued by Transport Canada under the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, reference number NPP#2019-200074.

*The sustainability of wild salmon*

The continued operation of this site is not expected to encumber salmon restoration or recovery efforts within the surrounding area.

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

AQ#5001 is located in East Three Fathom Harbour, Halifax County. The nearest aquaculture sites to AQ#5001 are located over thirty kilometers away near Sober Island, Halifax County. AQ#5001 is located in the nearshore environment, immediately adjacent to the shoreline. There was no indication that the continued operation of this experimental site would have an impact on the productivity of other aquaculture sites.

**Decision:**

Based on the factors considered above, Aquaculture Licence and Lease #5001 shall be renewed for a fourth one-year term (August 2, 2024 to August 1, 2025). As a point of clarification, all previous conditions, undertakings and reporting requirements shall remain in effect.

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

August 21, 2024

Date