

Findings and Decision- Amendment Application of Aquadelights Seafoods Limited for AQ#1349

1. Overview:

On April 23, 2019, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA) received an application from Aquadelights Seafoods Limited to amend Aquaculture Licence and Lease #1349 (AQ#1349) to authorize bottom shellfish cultivation with gear, as described below:

Table 1. Description of Aquaculture Licence and Lease #1349

Type: Marine	Current Size: 3.34HA
Number: AQ#1349	Current Cultivation Method: Bottom cultivation without gear
Applicant: Aquadelights Seafoods Limited	Current Species: American oyster, Bay quahog
Location: Chance Harbour, Pictou County	Proposed Amendment: Authorize Bottom Shellfish Cultivation with Gear

2. History

AQ1349 was first issued on March 17, 2010 for a ten-year term (November 2, 2009 to November 1, 2019). The licence for AQ#1349 was renewed on December 5, 2019 for a ten-year term (November 2, 2019 to November 2, 2029). The lease for AQ#1349 was renewed on December 5, 2019 for a twenty-year term (November 2, 2019 to November 2, 2039).

3. Procedure

3.1 Performance Review

A performance review of the information submitted by the operator in support of their amendment 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(d) of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations, and was completed on May 15, 2020.

3.2 Public Comment Period

Notice of the application for the renewal of AQ#1349 for the 30-day public comment period was published on NSDFA's website (<http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/public-information/>) for the period of April 9, 2020 to May 8, 2020. Notice of the application was also published in the Royal Gazette Part I on April 9, April 16, April 23, and April 30, 2020.

3.3 Submissions

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

4. **Factors to be considered**

Review of the file indicates that the site has had consistent production and employment. Information submitted in support of the amendment application indicates continued contributions to the local and provincial economy. The information in support of the amendment suggests continued production is planned for this site and continued employment. Department staff will continue to monitor that production plans are implemented as submitted.

The Farm Management Plan for AQ#1349 had previously been conditionally approved. The conditional approval was predicated on the operator submitting an amendment application to address historical use of gear on site. As such, the amendment does not propose a new activity but rather properly authorized an existing activity. The use of gear on the bottom can allow for the operator to hold product to meet operational needs. The operator of AQ#1349 will be required to adhere to the navigation requirements of the *Canada Navigation Act*, including necessary site marking requirements. The Licence and Lease documents will allow for continued access through the leased area for the purposes of recreational activities; however, others will not be permitted to carry out the harvest of species authorized on AQ#1349.

The Farm Operations section of the Farm Management Plan for AQ#1349 will require the operator to indicate how they will operate AQ#1349 in accordance with industry best practices with respect to maintaining the site in good order, the removal of decommissioned farm supplies and equipment, and the retrieval of gear or debris that has broken loose. Also, the Farm Management Plan for AQ#1349 must include wildlife interaction strategies to mitigate impacts on, and from, wildlife in the area of the site.

There are no recorded instances on file of AQ#1349 interfering with other users of the public waters surrounding the operation. Any complaints received by the Province of Nova Scotia specific to a particular aquaculture site, such as AQ#1349, are reviewed by Nova Scotia Environment, with appropriate follow-up and prescribed actions taken if necessary. The operator of AQ#1349 is also required to adhere to all necessary and relevant Provincial and Federal legislation and regulations that may be applicable to the marine cultivation of shellfish.

The review of the application noted that there are no expected impacts on fisheries activities as a result of the amendment of this lease and licence. There were no ecological concerns identified in the past performance of this site with respect to negative impacts on other fisheries. AQ#1349 is licensed to cultivate shellfish species, and as such there is no evidence that shellfish aquaculture will have impacts on the sustainability of wild salmon. The successful growth of American oysters in Chance Harbour has been proven. The information reviewed during the review of the application did not indicate adverse impacts on the surrounding public waters.

AQ#1349 is located in Chance Harbour, Pictou County. AQ#1349 is located approximately 0.10 km from AQ#1329, with AQ#1350 being approximately 2.40 km away. 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 #1349 and Lease #1349 shall be amended to authorize bottom with gear cultivation method. Except as expressly amended, Licence #1349 and Lease #1349 shall continue in full force and effect.

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

6. Conditions

In addition, the following condition shall apply:

The operator shall adhere to the following site marking requirements:

- a) Mark each corner and angle of the lease from May 1 to November 30, annually;
- b) Mark each corner and angle of the lease with a cautionary yellow buoy of a minimum 16 inches in diameter;
- c) Display "PRIV" in black, on opposite sides of each buoy;
- d) At 1 corner buoy, display in black, the licence/lease number, licence holder's name and contact phone number.



May 26, 2020

Brennan Goreham
Aquaculture Administrator
Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Date