

Decision – Application to Administrator

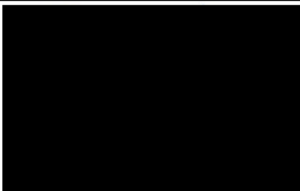
Application Summary:

Application Reference Number:	REF#586
Aquaculture Site Number:	AQ#0747
Application Class:	Class II
Application Type:	Renewal
Abstract:	Renewal of Licence
Applicant Name:	Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd.
Date Received by Department:	October 8, 2025
Location:	Country Harbour
County:	Guysborough County
Site Type:	Marine
Operation Type:	Commercial

Current Licence Information:

Site Size (in hectares):	5.47 Ha
Method(s) of Cultivation:	Suspended
Species:	Blue Mussel, American Oyster & Giant Sea Scallops
Term of Licence:	April 19, 2016, to April 19, 2026
Term of Lease:	April 19, 2016, to April 19, 2036

Decision:

Decision Issued:	Approved
Signature and Date:	 September 13, 2026 Bruce Hancock, Aquaculture Administrator

Definitions:

The following are terms, acronyms and definitions that may appear in this document:

Act means the Nova Scotia *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act*

Department means the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Regulations means the Nova Scotia *Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations*

Site History:

Aquaculture licence no. 0747 was first licenced by the Province on April 19, 1996, for a 10-year term, from April 19, 1996, to April 19, 2006, for the suspended cultivation of blue mussel, and giant sea scallops on a 5.47-hectare site located in Country Harbour, Guysborough County.

On November 1, 1997, the licence was assigned to Country Harbour Sea Farms Ltd. It was assigned to 2382144 Nova Scotia Ltd. on June 16, 2006, the same date that a renewal was approved establishing a new term from April 19, 2006, to April 19, 2011. On September 17, 2008, the licence was assigned to Atlantic Aqua Farms Limited Partnership. A renewal approved on November 26, 2013, extended the term from April 19, 2011, to April 19, 2016. The licence was then assigned to Bill & Stanley Oyster Company Ltd. on February 1, 2014. An amendment approved on May 29, 2014, added American oyster as an authorized species. A renewal approved on May 3, 2016, established a licence term from April 19, 2016, to April 19, 2026, and a lease term from April 19, 2016, to April 19, 2036. On August 13, 2018, an amendment to Schedule B was approved. An application submitted on September 23, 2019, to add Rainbow trout was withdrawn, and no changes were made as a result.

Outcomes of Compliance Review:

Pursuant to Section 33 of the Regulations, the Administrator (or an appointed employee) must conduct a compliance review of the applicant in accordance with Sections 86 and 87 of the Regulations.

The compliance review identified historical site-marking deficiencies and instances of operations occurring outside approved lease boundaries by this operator but not specifically with this site. Complaints and a written warning related to site marking and hazard buoys were reported by enforcement authorities; however, no summary offence tickets, charges, or convictions were identified. Department records indicate the operator is compliant with Farm Management Plan requirements, and applications to amend the boundaries of affected sites remain under consideration. Overall, the review did not identify concerns that warrant suspension, revocation, or other regulatory action in relation to this application.

Outcomes of Performance Review:

Pursuant to Section 34 of the Regulations, the Administrator (or an appointed employee) must conduct a performance review of the associated aquaculture site in accordance with Sections 89 and 90 of the Regulations.

The performance review determined that aquaculture site AQ#0747 has historically been used for shellfish cultivation, primarily mussels, and remains suitable for future shellfish production. The site is currently inactive, with no gear present and no reported production or sales since 2017, largely due to workforce limitations in the Country Harbour area. The site is included within an approved Farm Management Plan, is classified as open for shellfish harvesting, and the operator has expressed an intention to reactivate the lease for mussel production when staffing resources become available. No performance-related concerns were identified that would support refusal of the renewal application.

Consultations on Application to Administrator:

Pursuant to Clause 32(a) of the Regulations, the Administrator must undertake consultations with any of the following as required under the laws of the Province or of Canada with respect to the application:

- A department or agency of the Government of Nova Scotia
- A department or agency of the Government of Canada

As such, consultations were undertaken with the following departments or agencies:

Government of Nova Scotia:

- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Public Submissions on Application to Administrator:

Pursuant to Clause 32(c) of the Regulations, the Administrator must undertake consultations with the public, in the manner provided in Section 43 of the Regulations.

Pursuant to Section 43 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 a 30-day period, from Wednesday, April 8, 2026 (at 12:00 AM), and ended on Friday, May 8, 2026 (at 11:59PM).

There were no written submissions received by the Department during the 30-day public comment period.

Factors to be Considered:

Under Section 17(1) of the Regulations, in making decisions related to marine aquaculture sites, the Administrator must take into consideration the optimum use of marine resources, as determined by taking into consideration the following factors only:

- a) The contribution of the proposed operation to community and Provincial economic development;
- b) Fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;
- c) The oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;
- d) The other users of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;
- e) The public right of navigation;
- f) For marine finfish applications, the sustainability of wild salmon;
- g) The number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation.

All of the above factors have been taken into consideration prior to making the decision on this application. The following is a summary of the outcomes of the Departmental review and any consultation undertaken (where indicated above). This summary is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the results following review and consultation.

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

Renewal of the licence supports the continuation of an established shellfish aquaculture business operating in Guysborough County. The applicant maintains processing capacity and aquaculture infrastructure in the region and has indicated an intention to return the site to active production when labour becomes available. The operation has the potential to support employment and contribute to economic activity in the local community and Province.

Fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation

The review identified no significant conflicts between the proposed operation and surrounding fishery activities. The site has existed historically within Country Harbour and no concerns regarding impacts on commercial fisheries were identified during review. The presence of a commercial shrimp vessel operating in the area was noted, but no adverse interactions with the lease have been reported.

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

Historical use of the site demonstrates that the area is capable of supporting shellfish aquaculture. Department reviewers concluded that the oceanographic and benthic characteristics are suitable for the cultivation of blue mussels, American oysters, and giant sea scallops, and that the existing site configuration is appropriate for the environmental conditions present at the location.

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

No significant impacts on other users of the surrounding public waters were identified. The review found no evidence that renewal of the licence would adversely affect recreational, commercial, or other legitimate uses of the area.

The public right of navigation

The site is located outside the primary navigation corridor within Country Harbour. The lease is subject to Transport Canada navigation approvals, and reviewers found no concerns regarding interference with navigation. Renewal of the licence is not expected to adversely affect the public right of navigation provided the site continues to be marked in accordance with applicable requirements.

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

The proposed renewal is consistent with and supports the orderly development of aquaculture in the region. Reviewers concluded that continued authorization of the site would not impede other aquaculture operations and may contribute positively to regional shellfish production if the site is returned to active cultivation. The applicant is an established aquaculture operator with multiple sites in the area and a history of successful shellfish production.

Decision:

Having considered the application, the outcomes of the compliance review and performance review, the results of departmental review, the absence of any public submissions, and the factors prescribed under subsection 17(1) of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations applicable to shellfish aquaculture, I find that the proposed renewal represents an appropriate and optimum use of the marine resource. The evidence before me demonstrates that the site remains suitable for shellfish cultivation, that renewal will not adversely affect surrounding users or navigation, and that continuation of the licence supports aquaculture development and economic activity within the region. Accordingly, the application to renew aquaculture licence no. 0747 is approved.

The licence shall be renewed for a term of ten (10) years from April 19, 2026 to April 18, 2036.

Modifications:

No modifications.

Implementation:

The licence documents shall be prepared in accordance with the Department's standard operating documents. The decision shall be deemed implemented once the licence documents have been signed by all parties. The licence shall be made publicly available subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, once the decision has been implemented.