Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Aquaculture Division, Licensing & Leasing Unit
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Decision – Application to Administrator

Application Summary:

Application Reference Number:	REF#601
Aquaculture Site Number:	AQ#1224
Application Class:	Class II
Application Type:	Renewal
Abstract:	Application to Renew Licence No. 1224
Applicant Name:	Paul Budreski
Date Received by Department:	January 30, 2026
Location:	Little Harbour
County:	Pictou
Site Type:	Marine
Operation Type:	Commercial

Current Licence / Lease Information:

Site Size (in hectares):	58.54
Method(s) of Cultivation:	Bottom cultivation without gear (seeding only)
Species:	American Oyster, Bay Quahog, Bay Scallop, Bar Clam
Term of Licence:	February 27, 2016, to February 27, 2026
Term of Lease:	February 27, 2016, to February 27, 2036

Decision:

Decision Issued:	Approved
Signature and Date:	[redacted] September 29, 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:

The Licence and Lease was originally issued to Paul Budreski on February 27, 1991, for a ten-year term from February 27, 1991, to February 27, 2001, for bottom cultivation without gear of American oyster, Bay scallop, Bar clam and Bay quahog located in Little Harbour, Pictou County. The Licence and Lease were renewed on January 9, 2001, for a five-year term from February 27, 2001, to February 27, 2006. The Licence and Lease were renewed on March 7, 2006, for a five-year term from February 27, 2006, to February 27, 2011. The Licence and Lease were amended on July 21, 2009, to expand the size from 49.96HA to 58.60HA. The Licence and Lease were renewed on March 9, 2011, for a five-year term from February 27, 2011, to February 26, 2016. The Licence was renewed on June 10, 2016, for a ten-year term from February 27, 2016, to February 27, 2026, and the Lease was renewed on June 10, 2016, for a twenty-year term from February 27, 2016, to February 27, 2036.

Outcomes of Compliance Review:

Pursuant to section 33 of the Regulations, a compliance review was completed for Paul Budreski and the associated persons and corporate entity within the scope of the review. The review identified a concern relating to a separate aquaculture site, AQ1112, where vexar bags containing mature oysters were observed during a departmental inspection on September 12, 2023. As AQ1112 was authorized only for bottom cultivation without gear, this constituted the use of an unauthorized cultivation method. A referral of non-compliance was drafted but was not submitted, and the operator subsequently applied to amend the licence to permit the use of gear.

No compliance concern was identified in relation to AQ1224. The Aquatic Animal Health Unit reported no known compliance issues relating to the operator, and the compliance history and Justice database reviews identified no additional issues or relevant charges or convictions. Accordingly, no action was taken by the Administrator in response to the compliance review.

Outcomes of Performance Review:

Pursuant to section 34 of the Regulations, a performance review was completed for AQ1224. The site has consistently produced shellfish and remains active; however, the production targets identified in the renewal plan have only occasionally been achieved. Production records demonstrate variability in harvest levels, with losses attributed to invasive species and predators, and with natural recruitment fluctuating from year to year. Bay scallop and bar clam production has been limited, while American oyster and bay quahog remain the principal species harvested.

The operator also reported an increase in filamentous seaweed throughout the Little Harbour lease area. The seaweed may hinder manual harvesting by obscuring the seafloor and may reduce productivity by suffocating or dislodging viable shellfish. Despite these constraints, the site continues to support commercial shellfish cultivation and remains productive relative to the bottom-culture method employed. Continued efforts to improve productivity and achieve the projected harvest of 30,000 to 40,000 oysters and 5,000 kilograms of bay quahog annually are warranted. No action was taken by the Administrator in response to the performance review.

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 March 4, 2026, to April 3, 2026.

One submission was received by the Department during the 30-day public comment period. Of the one submission received, one in general met the requirements set out in subsection 43(4) of the Regulations (see below for exceptions) and have been included with this document (refer to **Supplement 1: Written Public Submissions**).

Some public submissions included material in a form other than written, including but not limited to, photographs and charts. Such material was not eligible for consideration by the Administrator under Section 43 of the Regulations. However, consistent with previous decisions made on aquaculture applications, the Administrator has chosen to include any such material with this document *if the material was created by the*

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

The application is for the renewal of an existing 58.54-hectare commercial shellfish site, with no requested change to the site boundaries, authorized species, or cultivation method. The operation has historically used local and Provincial services and suppliers, and existing infrastructure has supported its operation. No new infrastructure or change in employment is anticipated as a result of the renewal. The technical review identified no known adverse economic effects associated with continuing the existing operation. Renewal would allow the site's established production of American oyster and bay quahog to continue and would maintain its contribution to the local and Provincial shellfish sector.

Fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation

AQ1224 is an established lease that has coexisted with fisheries in Little Harbour. The renewal does not involve a change to the lease boundaries, species cultivated, production method, or use of gear. The technical review identified no known effects on fisheries requiring mitigation and determined that a network review was not required for this application. The continued operation of the site in its existing configuration is therefore not expected to adversely affect fishery activities in the surrounding public waters.

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

The site has been used successfully for bottom cultivation for many years and has reported shellfish production annually. The oceanographic and benthic conditions have historically supported bottom cultivation and natural seed collection, and the shellfish classification is open and approved. Ice, storms, predators, variable natural recruitment, invasive species, and increased filamentous seaweed have affected production or harvesting, but these conditions have not prevented continued commercial use of the site. The technical review concluded that the proposed production levels are reasonable and that continued use of the site for bottom cultivation without gear is suited to its oceanographic and biophysical setting.

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

The application proposes no change to the site boundaries, authorized species, or cultivation method. AQ1224 has coexisted with other users of the public waters for many years, and the technical review identified no expected change in effects on those users. One written public comment was received. The commenter indicated no objection to renewal within the mapped lease boundaries but asked whether oyster harvesting or related activity was authorized outside the defined licence area. The renewal authorizes aquaculture activity within the established boundaries of AQ1224 and does not authorize cultivation outside the licensed area.

The public right of navigation

AQ1224 is authorized for bottom cultivation without gear, and the application does not propose a change to the site configuration or introduce surface or suspended infrastructure. The technical review noted that no Navigation Protection Program approval is on file because the site is used for bottom-seeded cultivation only, and the application information is consistent with departmental records. As no gear or other structures are proposed in the water column, renewal of the existing operation is not expected to create an additional impediment to the public right of navigation.

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

The closest aquaculture operation is shellfish site AQ#0177, located in the same waterbody and operated by the same proponent. The application does not propose changes that would alter interactions with AQ#0177 or other aquaculture operations. The applicant has an approved Farm Management Plan to address mitigation measures where required. The technical review concluded that renewal would complement

aquaculture development in the region and would not impede existing aquaculture sites or the orderly development of aquaculture in the area.

Decision:

Based on the factors considered above, and having considered the optimum use of marine resources, the application by Paul Budreski to renew Aquaculture Licence No. 1224 for the bottom cultivation without gear of American oyster, bay quahog, bay scallop, and bar clam at Little Harbour, Pictou County, is hereby approved. The technical review found that the renewal is expected to promote the optimum use of marine resources, identified nothing that should lead to rejection, and recommended approval as requested.

The licence is renewed for a term of ten years, from February 28, 2026, to February 27, 2036. The existing lease remains in effect until February 27, 2036.

Modifications:

No modifications are imposed.

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.

Supplement 1: Written Public Submissions

Written Public Submissions via online form (1 page)

The Department does not endorse, and is not responsible for, the content of the included submissions, including, but not limited to, the accuracy, reliability, or currency of the information contained wherein.

Wherever they may occur, text within public submissions will have been redacted by the Department for the purpose of protecting personal information, including but not limited to, names, addresses, and contact information, with the exception of the following:

- The name and community of the individual submitting the written public comment
- The name of the applicant and any authorized contacts, as listed on the application form
- Names and contact information of politicians
- Names and contact information of municipal, provincial, and federal employees
- Names of aquaculture licence holders
- Names of authors of published works

The Department also reserves the right not to post submissions or to redact certain details from submissions, in accordance with the Terms of Use for government websites, web applications or web communications (copy of terms available at https://beta.novascotia.ca/terms).

Online Written Public Comment Submission

Submission ID #:	e46ef040
Submission Date (MM/DD/YYYY):	03/30/2026 10:57:17
Reference to Application:	REF#601
First Name:	RONALD
Last Name:	KRAWCZYK
Community:	Little Harbour Pictou

Written Comment on Application:

I have no objections regarding the application made by Mr. Paul Budreski for renewal of his license for a shellfish farm.

I do object to Mr Budreski fishing (oyster fishing) in the areas outside of the defined area.

Mr Budreski and a colleague are often fishing (snorkling) in front of my home and neighbours on MacNeil Point Road. It is not unusual for them to be there for a number of days in the channel in front of my house and neighbouring shoreline. If the licence is for the specific area outlined on the map, specifically AQ1224 that is fine with me.

My question: Do they have rights beyond the specified area, such as due west around the point of MacNeil Point road and south into the back bay of Chance Harbour, in front of 163 MacNeil Point?

