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

## Application Summary:

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| **Application Reference Number:** | REF#625 |
| **Aquaculture Site Number:** | AQ#1224 |
| **Application Class:** | Class III |
| **Application Type:** | Assignment |
| **Abstract:** | Application to assign Licence and Lease to Aquadelights Seafoods Limited |
| **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:

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| **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:

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| **Decision Issued:** | Approved |
| **Signature and Date:** | [redacted]<br>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 39 of the Regulations, a compliance review was conducted for the proposed assignee, Michael Paul N. Budreski, Barbara J. Budreski, and Aquadelights Seafoods Limited in accordance with Sections 86 and 87 of the Regulations.

The review identified one concern related to a separate aquaculture site, AQ1112, where cultivation gear was observed during a 2023 inspection on a site authorized only for bottom culture without gear. A referral of non-compliance was drafted but not submitted, and an application was subsequently made to authorize gear use at that site. No complaints, warnings, charges, convictions, Aquatic Animal Health concerns, or Justice database issues were identified for the proposed assignee. The Administrator determined that no compliance actions were necessary in relation to this application.

## Outcomes of Performance Review:

Pursuant to Section 40 of the Regulations, a performance review was conducted on site AQ#1224 in accordance with Sections 89 and 90 of the Regulations.

The review found that the site continues to produce shellfish and remains an active aquaculture operation. Annual production reports indicate ongoing production of American oyster and bay quahog, although production targets identified in the renewal plan are only occasionally achieved due to factors including fluctuating natural recruitment, invasive species, predation, storms, ice conditions, and increasing filamentous seaweed within the lease area. Despite these challenges, the site has demonstrated continued production over many years and Little Harbour remains a productive area for shellfish cultivation and seed collection. No significant performance concerns were identified that would warrant administrative action. As this application relates to an assignment rather than a renewal, the performance review was considered primarily for the purpose of evaluating the ongoing suitability and viability of the aquaculture site that would be managed by the proposed assignee.

## Consultations on Application to Administrator:

Pursuant to Clause 38(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

With respect to the assignment application, no consultations were required to be undertaken pursuant to Clause 38(a) of the Regulations.

## 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 proposes the assignment of an existing commercial shellfish licence and lease from Paul Budreski to Aquadelights Seafoods Limited. No changes are proposed to the site boundaries, cultivation methods, authorized species, or scale of operations. The assignment is therefore expected to maintain existing aquaculture activity, support continued use of local services and suppliers, and contribute to the ongoing economic activity generated by the operation. The site has operated for decades and is expected to continue producing American oyster and bay quahog following assignment.

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

The assignment application does not propose any physical or operational changes to the aquaculture site. Departmental review concluded that the site has historically co-existed with fisheries activities within Little Harbour and no impacts on surrounding fisheries have been identified. As the assignment does not alter site use, no additional impacts on fisheries activities are anticipated.

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

The site has a long history of shellfish cultivation and production, demonstrating that the environmental conditions of Little Harbour are suitable for bottom shellfish culture. Departmental review concluded that the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics continue to support the authorized cultivation methods and species. Although ice, storms, invasive species, and predation have affected productivity from time to time, the site continues to support commercial shellfish cultivation and no operational changes are proposed through this assignment. The suitability of the site is therefore expected to remain unchanged.

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

The assignment would not alter the location, size, authorized species, or cultivation methods for AQ#1224. No impacts on other users of the public waters were identified during the departmental review. The site has operated in its current configuration for many years and has co-existed with commercial fisheries and other users of Little Harbour.

### *The public right of navigation*

The application does not propose any changes to the authorized site configuration or cultivation method. AQ#1224 remains authorized for bottom cultivation without gear and no navigation concerns were identified through the review process. The assignment is therefore not expected to affect the public right of navigation.

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

The assignment of AQ#1224 to Aquadelights Seafoods Limited is not expected to negatively affect nearby aquaculture operations or impede future aquaculture development. The review concluded that continued operation of the site complements aquaculture activity in the region and supports the orderly development of aquaculture resources within Little Harbour. The nearest aquaculture operation is AQ#0177, which is located in the same waterbody and is operated by the same individuals involved in the proposed assignee corporation.

## Decision:

After considering the application, the compliance review, the performance review, the departmental technical review, and each of the factors prescribed by subsection 17(1) of the Regulations that apply to a shellfish aquaculture operation, I find that the proposed assignment promotes the optimum use of marine resources. The assignment does not involve any change to the physical characteristics or operation of AQ#1224 and will allow the site to continue as an active commercial shellfish operation. The proposed assignee, Aquadelights Seafoods Limited, is closely associated with the current licence holder, with Paul Budreski serving as the contact person for the corporation identified in the assignment application. The information reviewed indicates that the proposed assignee possesses the knowledge, experience, and operational continuity necessary to continue managing the site in accordance with the Act, Regulations, and licence conditions. No information was identified during the review process that would support refusing the application.

Accordingly, the application to assign Aquaculture Licence No. 1224 and the associated Lease from Paul Budreski to Aquadelights Seafoods Limited is approved.

### *Modifications:*

No modification.

### *Implementation:*

The licence and lease documents shall be prepared in accordance with the Department's standard operating documents. The decision shall be deemed implemented once the licence and lease documents have been signed by all parties. The licence and lease 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.