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April 28, 2015

To: Law Amendments Committee
Nova Scotia Legislature

From: Tom Smith
Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia

Subject: Submission to Committee
Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act (Amendments)

Good Afternoon Madame Chair and members of the committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, my name is Tom Smith and I am the Executive Director of the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia. I have worked in the food industry in Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces working with food retailers, distributors and farmers for over 20 years. I am here today to speak in favour of the proposed amendments to the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

The Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia represents over 70 members around our province who are actively involved in marine and land-based fish farming. Our members are actively involved in finfish farming for species such as salmon, arctic char, haddock, halibut, and trout. In addition, we represent sea-plant farmers as well as shellfish farmers growing oysters, muscles, clams, and quahogs.

In 2014 finfish sales in the province of Nova Scotia were approximately 43 million dollars, shellfish sales were approximately 4.2 million dollars, while other species of aquaculture farmed product stood at 7 million dollars. Last year aquaculture sales were approximately 54 million dollars in total sales.





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Last year the aquaculture industry in Nova Scotia, produced approximately 650 direct jobs on aquaculture farms, with an additional 1,000 indirect jobs that supported our industry.

In 2013 the Ivany Report challenged Nova Scotians to build a better province, show courage, and commit to a determination to do better. The Ivany Report challenged Nova Scotians and I quote, “to commit to transformation, because we can and must do better.”

Last year, the Nova Scotia government in response to this challenge commissioned the Doelle-Lahey Report to examine ways to improve the aquaculture industry in Nova Scotia and to put forward a number of recommendations.

In response to the recommendations of the Doelle-Lahey Report and in consultation with the aquaculture industry, Nova Scotia communities and interested stakeholders, The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has recommended amendments to The Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

On behalf of the industry, the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia supports these amendments and looks forward to working with the government to build a strong framework for the aquaculture industry for the future, particularly in rural Nova Scotia.

It is anticipated that the government will be bringing forward a new regulatory framework to position our industry for growth. It is anticipated that these regulations will focus on three key areas, number 1: the leasing and licencing of aquaculture in the province both for renewing existing leases as well as approving new leases for fish farmers in Nova Scotia, number 2: environmental regulations for the province, as well as number 3: regulations protecting fish health.





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For the past two years the aquaculture industry in Nova Scotia has virtually been put on hold while we waited for these amendments and the coming regulations to be developed.

However, I want to tell this committee that this time has not been wasted. Over the past year-and-a-half The Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia has embarked on an initiative to develop codes of best practices to compliment the anticipated new regulatory framework.

These codes support continued improvement in the industry, and we anticipate will increase stakeholder's confidence in the aquaculture sector. These codes of best practices include a code of containment, code of fish health and welfare, a code of shellfish health, a code of community engagement, and finally a bio-security plan for the industry.

The aquaculture industry in Nova Scotia looks forward to the adoption of the proposed amendments to The Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. Our industry is poised for growth and with our commitment to an increased community and stakeholder engagement...and our commitment to work closely with government to develop programs and regulations for responsible farming, we believe that our industry will see significant growth in economic development in our province.

We believe that Nova Scotia is well positioned to take advantage of this opportunity; our strength in Nova Scotia lies in our diversity, the species that we grow, the diversity of the locations that we grow them in, and the entrepreneurial nature of the businesses that are producing and growing the product.

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to present today and if you have any questions, I would only be too happy to answer.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Smith Executive Director

