

July 25, 2018

The Honorable Keith Colwell
Minister, Fisheries and Aquaculture
P.O. Box 2223
Halifax, NS
B3J 3C4

sent via e-mail: MINDFA@novascotia.ca

Dear Minister Colwell:

We are enclosing copies of two recently published studies examining the far-field impacts of the Spectacle Island fish farm (lease # 0835) on the Port Mouton Bay ecosystem. The results of these studies indicate current speed and water depth at the fish farm site are insufficient to mitigate the effects of waste accumulating and dispersing to the environment and consequently impacting water quality, habitat, and lobster catches. In light of these findings, we are writing to request that you permanently retire the Spectacle Island lease site and order the site decommissioned by the current owner.

Traditional fisheries in Nova Scotia, such as the lobster fishery, have supported and sustained coastal communities in Nova Scotia for generations and far exceed the revenue generated from fish farms. According to 2016 DFO statistics, the lobster fishery alone was valued at \$740 million in Nova Scotia whereas netpen fish farm production was valued at \$42 million (NSDFA 2016). When fish farms overlap with important fish and shellfish habitats, the potential for adverse impacts to local fisheries can be significant.

We understand that the province has deployed current meters in Port Mouton Bay which will be used to evaluate the carrying capacity for fish farming in the area. Hydrodynamic models and carrying capacity studies will provide information of the potential for waste dispersal and the amount of fish that can be raised in a particular area. However, these types of studies will not provide information on the impacts of waste dispersal on lobster or other associated species or their habitats.

We would be pleased to meet with you and your staff to discuss the results of these recently published studies and how these results could contribute to the studies being proposed by NS DFA.

In the meantime, we reiterate our request with regard to the Spectacle Island site. We have been calling for the closure of this site for close to a decade now. The science calls for it; the testing on the site calls for it; the damage to lobster habitat and spawning ground calls for it; and the recovery experienced by the last two closures that each extended over a 3 year period proves the efficacy of the request. A former Minister (Sterling Belliveau) and the Department (now within your mandate) has copies of both factual and scientific studies specific to this site (submitted by us) that provide ample back-up for your decision. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,
E. Brian Fisher
Ruth E. Smith
Directors of Friends of Port Mouton Bay

Janet H. Muttart
Robert L. Swim

c.c. Bruce Hancock, Director, Nova Scotia Aquaculture. Bruce.Hancock@novascotia.ca

Attachments: Milewski et al. 2018. Sea-cage aquaculture impacts market and berried lobster (*Homarus americanus*) catches. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 598:85-97.

McIver et al. 2018. Estimating nitrogen loading and far-field dispersal potential from background sources and coastal finfish aquaculture: A simple framework and case study in Atlantic Canada. *Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science* 205:46-57.