

UPDATE TO AVICC EXECUTIVE ON SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 5th, 2022

From: Daniel Arbour, AVICC - DFO/SAMAC representative

RE: Updates on DFO Shellfish Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee

Dear AVICC Executive and Staff,

This is my last update for the term as your representative on the DFO Shellfish Advisory committee. I have very much enjoyed the work and participation in the Committee, and am happy to report that over the past three years long-standing recommendations from Coastal communities regarding conditions of tenures and debris management was addressed by the industry and Federal government through both voluntary and regulatory measures. While change will not happen overnight, the direction is set for addressing ongoing concerns, which will help local government continue to support the sector and activities.

The latest meeting of SAMAC was on April 25th, 2022, and we covered the following topics:

Update on Conditions of Shellfish License taking effect in 2023

To refresh your memory, in 2021 DFO introduced the following new criteria as part of shellfish tenure conditions of license:

- 1) *New requirement for every company to label every piece of equipment and gear from 2023 on.*
This was seen as a key item to support producer responsibility, and accountability to the public.
- 2) *New requirements around traceability procedures.* DFO reported a large amount of illegal harvest finding their way through processing plant over the years. The new traceability standard is expected to put a significant dent into the flow of illegal product.
- 3) *Fish Habitat and Sea Floor Protection.* New protocols will trigger regular ocean clean-ups at farms. Quite often, debris that floats or finds its way to shore represents only a fraction of lost gear, which settles on the ocean floor.

2022 UPDATE: This is still on track to take effect. At the April 25th meeting DFO asked the advisory committee to what extent they should pursue non-compliant cases moving forward. I spoke up in favor of applying fines and threats to pull licenses for egregious cases where existing and new regulations are

not followed. No one from the other stakeholder groups opposed this comment, so DFO took this under advisement.

Aquaculture Area-Based Management set to be piloted in British Columbia

DFO confirmed that they will soon announce the first Area-Based pilot area in BC. They received 4 applications from different regions, and the selected area will be supported for the next two years. The goal of aquaculture area-based management is to establish principles of indigenous co-governance, ecosystem-based practices, and multi-stakeholder engagement in area planning and management. There is a thought that if things proceed well elements of this could be considered for the new Aquaculture Act, and perhaps shape overall coastal federal policy in the future.

Province of BC Update

BC staff reported on the changes to the Ministry, with split of a Ministry of Forests, and a new Ministry of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship. Staff confirmed that permits and licenses for aquaculture will stay with the Ministry of Forests, while the Ministry of Agriculture will continue with involvement on the sanitation and traceability aspects of the sector.

Norovirus, Local Government and Septic/Sewage

In March/April 2022, a [norovirus outbreak](#) in oysters affected over 500 people in the US and Canada, linked to processing plants on the East side of Vancouver Island. This served as a good reminder that local government and the Province are not finished in diminishing the risk to ocean environments from our human waste (ie septic and sewage systems). At the April 25th meeting, I invited the CAO of our Comox Valley Regional District to make a presentation around the frameworks for septic/sewage management in BC; the role and opportunities for local government; and specifically efforts around consideration of a sewage connection system around Baynes Sound, and consideration of septic regulations. It was noted that only a couple of Regional Districts have septic regulations, and the shellfish sector noted that existing provincial regulations seem inadequate to reduce risks. A good conversation ensued, and perhaps in the future AVICC could support broader conversations around this topic as it can affect all marine life and ocean foods.

Terms of Reference for the Committee

Lastly, minor amendments to the SAMAC terms of reference were presented and adopted by members. These aim to clarify length of appointments, and facilitate better Indigenous participation in the future.

And with that dear colleagues, I want to thank you for the appointment; for your work on the AVICC executive, and I always welcome any questions you may have.

Best,

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