



**Fisheries and Aquaculture
Office of the Minister**

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April 3, 2025

F131 2024-2025

[REDACTED]
Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of March 3, 2025, requesting the department formally redo public consultation on the Argyle Aquaculture Development Area (ADA).

My department won't be redoing the public engagement process that took place prior to the creation of the ADA. We will continue to process applications received through the initial call for proposals made on April 15, 2024, which will include a 30-day public comment period. This will provide an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the specific applications in accordance with the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act* and the *Aquaculture License and Lease Regulations*. If you would like more information on the licensing process, please visit our website at <https://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/licensing-leasing/>.

I have committed to the Municipality that we will not be announcing any additional Calls for Proposals for ADA locations until the first applications are processed and we have had an opportunity to meet with the Municipality of the District of Argyle (MoDA) to identify opportunities for further communication and information for the community. This does not mean a redo of the ADA process.

The public engagement on this project, led by MoDA and supported by our department, was comprehensive, thorough, and well documented. The purpose of the ADA is to proactively identify aquaculture sites through data collection, stakeholder engagement and analysis. To suggest that the MoDA did something wrong by engaging directly with industry to help identify locations for the ADA misses the point of the project. This was clearly laid out in the MOU that was signed between my department and MoDA on February 6, 2020. Furthermore, both the department and MoDA have been very transparent about the objective of this project from the very beginning.

It is also important to understand, that industry has always had the opportunity to apply for locations of their choosing in coastal waters around Nova Scotia and that it does not require the designation of an ADA for that to happen. It is through the formal application review process, that includes the 30-day public comment period, that a proposed location is assessed in accordance

with the Act and Regulations. This is the same 30-day public comment period that will be used for applications within the ADA.

I understand that there are still many questions and concerns from people that live near the ADA locations. I have committed to working with the MoDA to enhance our communications and information sharing as we move forward. We want to work with the community, to answer questions, while also supporting the development of a sustainable aquaculture industry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kent Smith', written in a cursive style.

Honourable Kent Smith, E.C.N.S.

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