



ABORIGINAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION
of Canada

December 4, 2014

Honourable Gail Shea,
Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Dear Minister Shea,

RE: Urgent Need to allow for Geoduck Aquaculture in B.C.

The Aboriginal Aquaculture Association (AAA) responded in April 2014 to the draft Integrated Geoduck Management Framework (IGMF) December 6, 2013. We are concerned since then little progress has been made on amendment and release of the framework.

The AAA has a long history working over five years with First Nations in B.C. who are interested in geoduck aquaculture. Our efforts influenced the inclusion of geoduck as an Alternative Species in the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan Initiative (NASAPI) for the Westcoast Shellfish Sector 2010. Recognizing that geoduck had potential for economic viability Fisheries and Oceans was to take the lead to foster development of commercially viable geoduck aquaculture. Some good work was done confirming a strong market for geoduck. It is expected that the market will remain strong and to grow particularly given the recent successful negotiation by the Harper government of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement. B.C. continues to lose ground to Washington State where expansion of the industry is underway.

First Nations have been engaged in planning and development efforts to enter into geoduck aquaculture to generate wealth and meaningful employment in First Nation communities recognizing that geoduck aquaculture can be a catalyst for positive economic change. There is growing frustration on lost opportunities to enter this industry and that development remains stalled.

While the Department is to be commended for the proposed expansion of geoduck aquaculture, our considered view is that the proposed policy fails to grasp the significant economic potential this industry can have for Canada, and specifically, for B.C. First Nations. In its current form the policy fails to create the conditions that would ensure new profitable opportunities, partnerships with existing stakeholders and seriously limits the economic potential of this emerging industry to contribute to

Promoting aquaculture that supports First Nation communities, culture and values.

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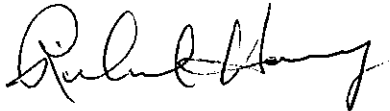
economic growth. In order to realize the full potential of geoduck aquaculture the proposed IGMF needs to go beyond the status quo.

For your reference we attach a copy of the AAA response to the IGMF. It provides recommendations and details areas that require significant improvements to the framework to produce a document that will achieve a shared interest in economic development.

We urge the Department to honor the intent of the NASAPI, the Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development, and the B.C. Treaty process and move forward with necessary changes to the IGMF to accommodate First Nation interests. While we appreciate there are often competing views or reasons to delay decisions of this nature, the consequences, if it is not amended will result in continued lost opportunities, closing the door to partnership development and investors in B.C.

There is an opportunity for the Department to facilitate creation of a viable geoduck industry in B.C. allowing for economic growth and job creation. We encourage the Minister to immediately apply your decision-making authority to advance geoduck aquaculture to ensure development of the capacity and profitability potential of this industry, an objective the AAA shares with the Governments of Canada and British Columbia.

Sincerely,



Richard Harry
President

Attachment: AAA Response & Recommendations Integrated Geoduck Management Framework - April 9, 2014

CC:

Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Honourable John Rustad, Minister, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Conservative Party of Canada - B.C. Caucuses

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