

**NOVA SCOTIA AQUACULTURE REVIEW BOARD**

IN THE MATTER OF: *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, SNS 1996, c 25*

- and -

NSARB-2025-001: Public Hearing on Application for Boundary Amendment for Marine Finfish Licence/Lease AQ#0814x and New Marine Finfish Licence/Lease AQ#1430 and AQ#1431, WFN Fish Farm Limited Partnership, Whycomagh Bay, Inverness County, Nova Scotia (the “**Application**”)

**Affidavit of Jeffery Nickerson affirmed on February 19, 2026**

I affirm and give evidence as follows:

1. I am Jeffery Nickerson, of Conquerall Mills, Nova Scotia.
2. I have personal knowledge of the evidence affirmed in this Affidavit except where otherwise stated to be based on information and belief.
3. I state, in this Affidavit, the source of any information that is not based on my own personal knowledge, and I state my belief of the source.

**Professional Background**

4. I am the principal of MJ Aqua Services Inc., and provide senior-level aquaculture advisory, operational leadership, regulatory guidance, and business development services to the aquaculture and fisheries sectors across Atlantic Canada. A true copy of my CV is attached as **Exhibit A**.
5. With more than 30 years of experience in commercial aquaculture fishing industries, and executive management, I have practical knowledge of aquaculture operations combined with a proven ability to scale sustainable enterprises and navigate complex regulatory environments.
6. I have held progressive leadership roles within the Atlantic Canadian aquaculture industry, including senior management positions with Cooke Aquaculture Inc., where I served as Business Development Manager and Regional Manager for Nova Scotia. In these roles, I

led multi-site marine farming operations, oversaw regulatory permitting and compliance, managed capital assets and production targets, and worked directly with provincial and federal regulators to advance new aquaculture developments. My experience spans finfish aquaculture operations, environmental performance management, production optimization, and strategic expansion initiatives.

7. In addition to my corporate leadership background, I have owned and operated aquaculture enterprises and have direct experience as a commercial fisherman in Southwest Nova Scotia. This combination of executive, operational, and on-the-water experience provides a comprehensive understanding of aquaculture systems from planning and permitting through production, harvest, and market delivery.
8. I also have extensive knowledge with Nova Scotia's aquaculture regulatory framework, including licensing and leasing processes, environmental compliance requirements, and interagency coordination. I served in industry leadership and advisory capacities, including as Vice President of the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia and as a member of provincial environmental and regulatory advisory committees, and have strong working relationships with government agencies and industry stakeholders.

### **Engagement with WFN**

9. MJ Aqua Services Inc. was retained by WFN Fish Farm Limited Partnership ("**WFN**") in mid-May 2025. Donald Davis had returned to management of WFN in April 2025, and retained me to provide on the ground operational support for WFN's aquaculture operation in Whycomomagh Bay (the "**Farm**") for a few days each week. He retained me to provide strategic planning support, management and operational guidance, and mentorship to staff to enhance their knowledge of modern fish-farming practices.

### **Improvements Implemented at the Farm**

10. Since being retained, I have been responsible for improving existing processes, ensuring that both existing and new equipment at the Farm are being used correctly, and providing guidance related to containment management, feed management, harvesting, and overall fish performance.

11. I also helped WFN develop both short and long-term project plans and worked closely with management to advance various initiatives, including:
- (a) **Feed Management:** Proper use and maintenance of feeding systems, including feed barges and cameras, is ensured through training and site visits. The FishTalk database is now online and into regular use. WFN now uses a structured feeding strategy to ensure fish receive the correct amount of feed at appropriate times. This is now supported by a remote feeding location in the community, where highly qualified staff monitor and feed fish in a controlled environment. These measures have resulted in improved growth rates.
  - (b) **Net Washing:** A systematic net-washing strategy is now in place at the Farm to ensure each net is washed weekly during the summer and early fall, when fouling with algae and mussel spat is most severe. The supplier of the net-wash equipment has sent trainers from Scotland to visit We'koqma'q and educate and mentor staff on both the operation and maintenance of the net washing equipment.
  - (c) **Temperature and Oxygen Monitoring:** With the support of InnovaSea, probes in each cage have been installed to provide real-time data on temperature and oxygen levels – which are critical information for management, fish health, and feeding operations.
  - (d) **Fish Health / Diving:** “Uplift” systems are now installed at the bottom of the cages to collect mortalities and move them to the surface through an air-assisted hose system. This allows mortalities (also referred to as “morts”) to be collected, examined, counted, and brought ashore without relying entirely on divers, as had previously been the case.

### **Containment Management & Fish Escape Mitigation**

12. I am advised by Donald Davis, and believe, that there have been suspected and confirmed breaches at the Farm which were reported to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

13. Containment management and mitigation of fish escapees is being addressed through increased staff training on infrastructure installation, maintenance, and inspections. The increased net washing protocols (discussed above) have reduced net weight, which in turn has reduced strain on nets and minimized the potential for damage.
14. In addition, WFN now has a protocol in place for the teams responsible for towing the cages use to ensure towing routes are free of any potential hazards which may damage the nets.
15. WFN has implemented the following initiatives to improve containment management and mitigate escapee incidents:
  - (a) Net inventory and lifecycle tracking under the Farm Management Plan (“**FMP**”) has been ongoing, with increased visibility in 2025;
  - (b) Approximately \$ [REDACTED] has been invested in net upgrades over the past five years;
  - (c) Replacement of legacy cages with 100-metre heavy-duty HDPE circular cages is underway as part of a five-year capital plan. Additional cages are scheduled for installation in 2026;
  - (d) Engineer approval is required for all moorings, cages, and nets before stocking, and this is a legal requirement;
  - (e) Standard Operating Procedures (“**SOPs**”) for installation, maintenance, and inspections were developed as part of the FMP; and
  - (f) Training sessions on these SOPs are planned for the winter of 2026 so staff can become familiar with them and offer feedback.

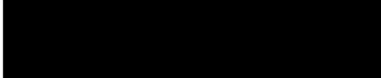
#### **Further Technologies Being Explored by WFN**

16. The implementation of the following technologies for the Farm are being explored by WFN:
  - (a) AI-enabled feed cameras to detect pellets and identify satiation;
  - (b) Supplemental oxygen systems to maintain adequate dissolved oxygen during low-oxygen periods;

- (c) A biomass estimator, an HD camera system that takes large volumes of fish photos and uses AI to provide average cage weights;
- (d) An aquaculture-specific ROV to inspect nets and fish, to georeference any holes, and install patches as needed;
- (e) Electronic reporting systems so dive reports, cage inspections, and other operational reports are completed onsite and automatically uploaded to a central database; and
- (f) Real-time data integration from feeding systems and environmental loggers into FishTalk to support timely and accurate decision-making.

17. I make this affidavit in support of WFN's Application and for no improper purpose.

**VIRTUALLY AFFIRMED** before me in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on MS Teams, with Mr. Nickerson in Conquerall Mills, Nova Scotia on February 19, 2026.

  
David Barry  
A Barrister of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

  
Jeffery Nickerson

DAVID A. BARRY  
A Barrister of the Supreme  
Court of Nova Scotia

**WFN Application re AQ#0814x, AQ#1430,  
AQ#1431 in Whycocomagh Bay, Inverness  
County**

This is Exhibit A referred to in the Affidavit  
of Jeffery Nickerson, virtually affirmed before  
me on February 19, 2026.



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David Barry  
A Barrister of the Supreme Court of Nova  
Scotia

## Jeffery Edward Nickerson

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED], NS



### EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic and results-driven aquaculture executive with over three decades of hands-on leadership in aquaculture operations, commercial fishing, and business development throughout Atlantic Canada. Expertise in managing complex projects, scaling sustainable operations, and navigating regulatory frameworks. Proven record of growing enterprises, driving innovation, and fostering partnerships with government and industry stakeholders.

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Aquaculture Operations & Production
- Business & Market Development
- Project & Asset Management
- Regulatory & Environmental Compliance
- Stakeholder Relations & Government Affairs
- Strategic Planning & Implementation
- Sales, Procurement & Financial Oversight
- Team Leadership & Organizational Development

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **MJ Aqua Services Inc**

*Owner/consultant | 2025-present*

- Providing operational, development and management services to the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations, fisheries and aquaculture sectors including Waycobah aquaculture operations.

#### **Cooke Aquaculture Inc. – Nova Scotia & Newfoundland**

*Business Development Manager | 2019 – 2025*

- Directed growth initiatives across Atlantic Canada, launching new aquaculture projects and managing strategic partnerships.

- Oversaw complex regulatory processes, permitting, and engagement with provincial and federal authorities.
- Championed expansion initiatives into new territories, contributing to long-term corporate growth.

*Regional Manager – Nova Scotia | 2017 – 2019*

- Led province-wide aquaculture operations; managed production goals, regulatory compliance, and operational budgets.
- Developed and implemented region-specific strategies aligned with company objectives.

*Production Manager – Nova Scotia | 2008 – 2017*

- Managed production and operations for multiple marine sites across NS.
- Improved productivity, fish health, and environmental performance metrics.

*Area Manager – Southern Nova Scotia | 2006 – 2008*

- Oversaw daily farm operations for multiple sites; managed teams and coordinated site logistics.

*Site Manager – Saddle Island Marine Farm | 2004 – 2006*

- Directed operational activities, including feeding, fish health, and site compliance.

**Scotia Garden Seafoods, Yarmouth, NS**

*Sales & Procurement Manager | 2004*

- Developed seafood procurement channels and sales strategies.
- Managed fleet operations and relationships with buyers and suppliers.

**Deer Island Ltd, Shelburne, NS**

*General Manager | 1996 – 2003*

- Oversaw all aspects of operations for a salmon aquaculture firm, including sales, staffing, and financial planning.
- Built scalable farming operations and managed production and distribution.

**Bayside Seafarm Ltd, Digby, NS**

*Co-Owner | 1994 – 1996*

- Launched and operated a salmon aquaculture business at Rattling Beach.
- Managed operations, financing, and direct-to-market sales strategy.

**Commercial Fisherman, Southwest Nova Scotia**

*1987 – 1990 | 1992 – 1994*

- Specialized in swordfish, tuna, lobster, and mackerel for various NS fishing operations.

**INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & SERVICE**

- Vice President, Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia
- Member, NS Aquaculture Environmental Advisory Committee
- Advisory Member, Minister's Regulatory and Traceability Committees, NS
- Alternate Board Member, Newfoundland Aquaculture Association