



**DECISION and ORDER**

**NSARB 2025-001**

**NOVA SCOTIA AQUACULTURE REVIEW BOARD**

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

- and -

**IN THE MATTER OF:** Applications made by WFN FISH FARM LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (FORMERLY KNOWN AS WAYCOBAH FIRST NATIONS BAND COUNCIL AND AS WE'KOQMA'Q FIRST NATION) for a BOUNDARY AMENDMENT TO AQ#0814X and for two new MARINE FINFISH AQUACULTURE LICENCES and LEASES, AQ#1430 and AQ#1431 for the cultivation of RAINBOW TROUT (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in WHYCOCOMAGH BAY, INVERNESS COUNTY

**BEFORE:** Damien Barry, Hearing Chair and Board Member  
Bruce Morrison, Board Member  
Roger Percy, Board Member

**HEARING DATES:** February 23, 2026 (in-person)

**DECISION DATE:** May 5, 2026

**Introduction**

- [1] WFN Fish Farm Limited Partnership ("WFN") has operated the Whycomomagh Bay AQ#0814 farm since 2011.
- [2] WFN began operating experimental sites AQ#5010 (which overlaps with the requested commercial site AQ#1430) in 2019, and AQ#5013 (which overlaps with the requested commercial site AQ#1431), in 2020.
- [3] In 2016, it was identified that a portion of the infrastructure, including some of the moorings and cages, present at AQ#0814, was outside the lease boundaries. The Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA) provided WFN with two options: (1) to bring the farm operation within the lease boundary; or (2) apply for a boundary amendment.
- [4] WFN filed their boundary amendment application in 2019, requesting a boundary amendment for site #AQ0814, which would replace the leases and licenses for three sites AQ#0814, AQ#0600 and AQ#0845 with one larger site, referred to as AQ#0814x (which overlaps all three sites).

- [5] In 2024, WFN revised its boundary amendment application and reduced the requested lease area of AQ#0814x from approximately 75 to 65 hectares. The proposed site AQ#0814x will consist of ten (10) cages in a 2 x 5 array configuration in the production area and will also include an overwintering area.
- [6] In 2019, WFN also submitted its applications for commercial sites AQ#1430 and AQ#1431. These commercial sites overlap with WFN's experimental sites AQ#5010 and AQ#5013. DFA issued the experimental sites and annually renewed them.
- [7] The proposed site AQ#1430 is 31.90 hectares and AQ#1431 is 34.42 hectares, each with ten (10) cages in a 2 x 5 configuration for the cultivation of Rainbow trout.
- [8] On October 21, 2025, the Honourable Kent Smith, Minister of DFA, referred the Application, pursuant to section 49(c) of the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act*, SNS 1996, c 255 for a decision before the Board for an adjudicative amendment.
- [9] No applications for intervenor status were received in this matter.
- [10] Written submissions from members of the public, were received from Fred Harrington and Karen Hollett; and Derek Purcell, on behalf of the Healthy Bays Network. These submissions can be found at [https://arb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2026-02/NSARB-2025-001%20WRT%20ALL\\_0.pdf](https://arb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2026-02/NSARB-2025-001%20WRT%20ALL_0.pdf) .
- [11] The Application hearing was scheduled to proceed on February 23, 2026.
- [12] An in-person hearing before the Board was heard on February 23, 2026, in Whycomomagh, NS, following which final written submissions were received from all parties.

## Background

- [13] In 2013, the Province of Nova Scotia tasked an independent panel to develop a regulatory framework for aquaculture in Nova Scotia. Following extensive study and consultation, Meinhard Doelle and William Lahey produced the report titled *A New Regulatory Framework for Low-Impact/High-Value Aquaculture in Nova Scotia* [Doelle Lahey Report] in 2014. The report's authors suggested aquaculture regulation be guided by the concept that aquaculture that integrates economic prosperity, social well-being and environmental sustainability is characterized by low impact and high value. They explained that this meant that, ideally, social and environmental impacts were low and decreasing over time while aquaculture had positive economic and social value, increasing over time.
- [14] This work formed the basis for a new legislative and regulatory framework governing aquaculture in the province, namely the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act* 1996 c.25 as amended (the Act). The purpose of the Act, as set out in Part 43A, is to:

- (a) recognize that aquaculture is a legitimate and valuable use of the Province's coastal resources;
- (b) ensure aquaculture is conducted under conditions and in accordance with controls that protect the environment;
- (c) provide a predictable and efficient regulatory environment for business and public confidence;
- (d) ensure equity, fairness and compatibility in access to, and utilization of, public water resources for aquaculture;
- (e) ensure that members of the public have access to information with respect to the regulatory process and an opportunity to participate in the process;
- (f) ensure that regulations governing aquaculture are achievable, contain incentives for compliance and are enforceable;
- (g) ensure that coastal communities derive positive social and economic benefits from aquaculture;
- (h) ensure that aquaculture is conducted with due regard to the health, well-being and recovery of species at risk; and
- (i) ensure that the regulation of aquaculture contributes to the productive development of the Province's coastal resources.

[15] The legislation also established the Board under section 48(1) of the Act, giving it the authority, *inter alia*, to decide upon the grant of aquaculture licenses and leases. The Board is independent of the Minister, who is bound by the conclusions and direction of the Board [section 52 of the Act].

[16] Boundary amendments are governed by s.49 of the Act:

*49 The Review Board shall, with respect to marine areas not designated as aquaculture development areas, make decisions with respect to*

*(a) an application for an aquaculture licence or aquaculture lease;*

*(b) where an existing aquaculture licence or aquaculture lease authorizes the production of shellfish or aquatic plants but not finfish species, an application to amend the aquaculture licence or aquaculture lease to authorize the production of a finfish species; and*

*(c) an application to amend an aquaculture licence or aquaculture lease to change the boundaries of an existing aquaculture site if the change results in an increase in the area of the aquaculture site. 2015, c. 19, s. 9.*

[17] In order to reach a decision on an application, the Board must consider the factors as set out in s. 17 of the regulations (effective December 16, 2025), in the overall context of the optimum use of marine resources:

- (a) the contribution of the proposed operation to community and Provincial economic development;*
- (b) fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;*
- (c) the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;*
- (d) the other users of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation;*
- (e) the public right of navigation;*
- (f) the sustainability of wild salmon; and*
- (g) the number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquaculture operation.*

[18] Applying the factors in this case, WFN is clearly required by statute to go through the process and apply the factors to the facts of the case. The statutory requirements follow:

#### **Consultations on Class I application**

*23 (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), on receiving a completed Class I application, an employee of the Department appointed by the Minister under subsection 47(2) of the Act must consult with those persons or entities set out in clauses 47(2)(a) to (c) of the Act.*

*(2) On receiving an application to amend a non-finfish licence or lease to change the boundaries of an existing aquaculture site to increase the area of the associated aquaculture site, the Minister must appoint an employee of the Department to consult with all of the following:*

*(a) other departments or agencies of the Government or the Government of Canada, as may be required under the laws of the Province or of Canada;*

*(b) any person, group of persons or organization that the Minister considers necessary or advisable in the circumstances; and*

*(c) the public, in the manner set out in Section 43.*

### Consultations with Network Partners

[19] Bodies (Network Partners) consulted by DFA in this case were as follows:

1. Fisheries and Oceans Canada
2. Canadian Food Inspection Agency
3. Transport Canada
4. Environment and Climate Change Canada – Shellfish Water Classification Program
5. Environment and Climate Change Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
6. NS Department of Environment and Climate Change (Previously Department of Environment)
7. NS Department of Agriculture
8. NS Department of Municipal Affairs (Previously Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing)
9. NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (Previously Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage)
10. NS Department of Natural Resources (Previously Department of Lands and Forestry and Department of Natural Resources and Renewables)
11. NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Inland Fisheries
12. Office of Aboriginal Affairs (Now L'Nu Affairs)

[20] Fisheries and Oceans Canada made the following recommendations in the event of the applications being granted by the Board:

- Moorings and anchors be located to avoid eelgrass and minimize disturbance to all submerged aquatic vegetation when securing moorings to the bottom;
- Buoy lines, backlines and scope lines be kept taut at all times to reduce risk of entanglement by marine mammals;
- Take reasonable measures to minimize the deposit of waste feed and feces;
- Mooring system, grid system and cages be replaced or cleaned regularly;
- Monitoring of dissolved oxygen at multiple depths remains a priority;
- Equipment, ballast tanks, bilges and hulls be inspected and cleaned regularly;
- When depositing a pest control product or drug the proponent must take reasonable measures to minimize detriment to fish and fish habitat outside the facility;
- Not deposit pest control product at site AQ#1430 on the same day as at the other proposed site AQ#1431;
- Avoid accidental or intentional deposit of deleterious substances other than those regulated by the Aquaculture Activities Regulations; and
- Prioritize preventing Rainbow Trout escapees.

[21] Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Services Division (CWS) provided advice applicable to their legislative mandate, including that the proponent must comply with the Migratory Birds Convention Act and Species at Risk Act. Specifically, the proponent should ensure no litter is left in coastal areas, manage the feed program in a manner that minimizes waste, use tarps to prevent bird access to fish feed, staff and vessels not approach concentrations of seabirds, waterfowl

or shorebirds, use well-muffled vessels, do not use beaches and wetlands for construction, operational or decommissioning activities, ensure no oil spills occur, and grow lights should be shielded and aimed downwards.

[22] Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CTTH) advised that if during construction or operation of the aquaculture sites, any archaeological artifacts are recovered, to immediately contact the Coordinator of the Special Places Program at CTTH.

[23] Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommended mitigation measures regarding wildlife attractants (e.g., storage of nets, fish food), entanglement of diving fish eating birds, waste pollution, predators such as seals, and potential human/wildlife conflicts. DNR also indicated that there is significant wood turtle habitat near AQ#0814x, as well as bald eagles in the general area. DNR requested the proponent monitor impacts to the bald eagle and report all diving bird entanglements or mortalities to DNR, provide a copy of their Wildlife Interaction Plan (WIP), and report all wildlife mortalities to their Regional Biologist and any other appropriate agencies within five business days.

[24] Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Inland Fisheries) did express some concern that angler access may be limited by the increased scale of the aquaculture operations in Whycocomagh Bay, and by an angling closure put in place for a portion of the bay by DFO in April 2020. However, the Board notes that the proposed leased areas represent a small portion of Whycocomagh Bay, and recreational fishing has co-existed with the existing site(s) for decades and that the DFO Variation Order that closed angling for any species in Whycocomagh Bay expired December 31, 2022, and is no longer in effect.

[25] Apart from the above recommendations, no other recommendations or concerns were communicated by any of the other network partners.

[26] In their report on network consultations, DFA has also confirmed that they will work with the proponent to ensure that all recommendations as outlined above, are incorporated into their Farm Management Plan (FMP).

[27] On October 21, 2025, following completion of the internal review, DFA submitted the application to the Review Board.

### **Public Response**

[28] As stated, no request for intervenor status in respect of this proceeding were received and written submissions were received from two (2) parties.

[29] The first submission, by Fred Harrington and Karen Hollett, opposes the proposed aquaculture site (#1430) in Whycocomagh Bay, citing long-term personal observations of rich shoreline, wetland, and wildlife habitat directly adjacent to the proposed cages. It raises concerns about endangered Atlantic salmon, extremely low flushing rates leading to waste accumulation and pollution, noise from aeration and vessel activity, proximity of the nets to shore and sensitive eelgrass and wetlands,

increased garbage, and negative impacts on recreation and community use, recommending relocation to deeper water and extended fallowing if approved.

[30] The second submission, from the Healthy Bays Network, argues that the proposal fails key requirements of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations, emphasizing poor oceanographic suitability, chronic oxygen depletion, past environmental non-compliance, and inconsistencies between DFO science advice and provincial assessments. It further questions the economic viability of the project, highlights risks to other users of public waters and community social licence, and requests denial of the applications or, at minimum, stringent conditions and enhanced environmental safeguards.

[31] Affidavit evidence was tendered by Nathaniel Fiendel, Dr. Amanda Swim and Jessica Feindel, on behalf of DFA.

[32] Affidavit evidence was tendered by Donald Davis, Jeffrey Nickerson and Melissa Rommens, on behalf of WFN.

[33] All affiants appeared at the hearing and were subject to questioning by the Board.

[34] Written submissions were provided by WFN, after the conclusion of the in-person hearing.

[35] As stated, the statute mandates the consideration of the factors set out in s. 17 of the Regulations (effective December 16, 2025) in determining whether the farm is an optimum use of marine resources. These will now be considered.

**(a) The contribution of the proposed operation to community and Provincial economic development**

[36] The Board has considered evidence respecting the contribution of the proposed operation to community and provincial economic development and finds that the materials before it, including the Development Plans and affidavit evidence, demonstrate that the We'koqma'q First Nation owns and operates the Farm and has done so since 2011. The Board finds that the operation provides ongoing employment opportunities for members of the We'koqma'q First Nation and the surrounding region.

[37] The Board finds that the evidence shows the Farm employs 31 individuals in farm operations, the majority of whom are community members, and supports additional employment through associated hatchery and processing activities, including both seasonal and year-round positions.

[38] The Board finds that the evidence further demonstrates that the operation provides important skill development and training in technical and marine-related fields, and that local contractors and suppliers are engaged in support of the aquaculture activities. The Board also finds that testimony establishes that the availability of employment at the Farm and processing plant reduces the need for off-reserve employment programs previously required due to limited local opportunities.

[39] The Board therefore finds that the proposed operation provides ongoing economic benefits to the We'koqma'q First Nation and contributes to the provincial economy through employment, training, and local procurement.

**(b) Fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation**

[40] The Board has considered evidence concerning existing fishery activities in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquaculture sites and the extent to which those activities may be affected by the operation.

[41] The Board finds that finfish aquaculture has been carried out in Whycocomagh Bay for an extended period and has coexisted with recreational, traditional, and limited commercial fisheries, without identified conflicts. The Board further finds that the We'koqma'q First Nation has longstanding involvement in both fisheries and aquaculture, managed through an integrated approach, intended to ensure that these activities are complementary. The Board finds that traditional harvesting activities, including smelts, trout, eels, shellfish, and other species, continue during the operation of the Farm, and that no moderate livelihood fishery is currently conducted in the Bay. With respect to recreational fisheries, the Board finds that the long-standing provincial practice of stocking Rainbow trout continues and that there is no evidence that the Farm adversely affects recreational trout fishing or the sustainability of wild Atlantic salmon.

[42] The Board finds that commercial lobster and oyster fisheries in the Bras d'Or Lake have experienced historic declines due to factors unrelated to aquaculture and that lobster has not been present in Whycocomagh Bay for several decades. Based on surveys and historic data, the Board finds it unlikely that the proposed operation interferes with active commercial fisheries in the Bay.

[43] The Board finds that the evidence establishes the existence of regulatory oversight and operational measures addressing fish health, disease prevention, sea lice risk, containment management, and mitigation designed to protect wild fish populations. This includes oversight under the Aquaculture Management Regulations, approved Farm Management Plans, fish health permitting, veterinary surveillance, sea lice monitoring adapted to local conditions, infrastructure approved by professional engineers, and enhanced containment measures to reduce the risk of escape. While acknowledging the occurrence of historical escape events, the Board finds that ongoing improvements to infrastructure, monitoring, training, and biosecurity practices are in place.

[44] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the proposed aquacultural operation is not likely to result in unacceptable interference with existing fishery activities in the surrounding public waters, and that this factor weighs in favour of the Application.

**(c) The oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation**

[45] The Board has considered evidence respecting the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquaculture sites, including winds, waves, tides, currents, bathymetry, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and benthic conditions.

[46] The Board finds that finfish aquaculture occurs at or near the proposed locations, and has done so for several decades, and that the Proposed Production Plan is developed with regard to historical site performance, published studies, and recent site-specific data. The Board finds that the proposed cage configuration and infrastructure are reviewed by Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture officials and professional engineers, and are suitable for the physical conditions of the Bay, including wind exposure, wave climate, and water depth.

[47] The Board finds that currents, salinity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen levels do not, in themselves, preclude Rainbow trout culture, but require active monitoring and management. The Board is satisfied that enhanced real-time monitoring of oxygen and temperature, together with adaptive operational measures, is implemented to address site-specific risks, particularly those associated with fluctuating temperatures and low oxygen conditions.

[48] The Board finds that the evidence demonstrates the Farm is subject to both provincial and federal environmental monitoring regimes and that environmental performance has included periods requiring mitigation. The Board finds that the Proposed Production Plan incorporates reduced biomass levels, rotation of production areas, and extended fallowing to manage benthic recovery, and that baseline monitoring for the proposed sites demonstrates oxic conditions at the time of assessment. The Board further finds that the regulatory framework provides mechanisms to require mitigation or temporarily restrict stocking where thresholds are exceeded.

[49] The Board finds that the March 2025 anoxic upwelling event and the February 2026 super-chill event are attributable to rare and naturally occurring oceanographic conditions rather than operational failure. The Board further finds that additional monitoring, operational adjustments, and mitigation measures are implemented to reduce future risk, and that these events do not alter the opinions of regulatory and technical experts regarding the overall suitability of the sites when managed within the regulatory framework.

[50] The Board finds that the proponent was forthcoming with detailed descriptions of what occurred during these two particular events, and the subsequent mitigation efforts put in place to deal with these unfortunate events, in their affidavits, and the proponent's witnesses were candid and transparent with their answers to the Board's questions regarding these events during the hearing. As such the Board is confident that the two events were dealt with in an appropriate and responsible manner, and that sufficient mitigation efforts have been made to lessen the impact of any future similar events.

[51] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the Proposed Production Plan is designed with appropriate regard to the oceanographic and biophysical characteristics of the surrounding public waters, that regulatory monitoring and mitigation measures are in place to manage identified risks, and that this factor weighs in favour of the Application.

**(d) The other users of the public waters surrounding the proposed aquacultural operation**

[52] The Board has considered evidence respecting other users of the public waters of Whycomomagh Bay. The Board finds that the Bay is used for a range of activities, including boating, swimming, and fishing, and that these uses are addressed in the Development Plans.

[53] The Board finds that the Bras d'Or Lake is a popular cruising area for pleasure craft and that Whycomomagh Bay, which is accessed through a narrow channel, is frequented by small family vessels, kayakers, canoers, and small fishing vessels used by residents and seasonal users.

[54] The Board finds that other identified users of the Bay include community, recreational, tourism, and stewardship organizations and facilities, including the Whycomomagh Waterfront Centre Association and marina, Whycomomagh Provincial Park, Little Narrows Beach Municipal Park, local tourist accommodations, the Bras d'Or Lakes Biosphere Reserve Association, and the Bras d'Or Lakes Stewardship Society.

[55] The Board notes that none of these organizations or user groups sought standing to participate in, or to oppose, the Application.

[56] The Board has considered the objections raised by Fred Harrington and Karen Hollett, who oppose the Application in part on the basis that they no longer kayak or canoe in the direction of the experimental site due to the experience being described, in their words, as intimidating and unpleasant. The Board notes that no navigational safety risks were identified in their evidence.

[57] The Board has also considered wildlife as users of the Bay. The Board finds that mammals, birds, fish, and flora inhabit the area and that the Proponent's Wildlife Interaction Plan, as set out in its Farm Management Plan, is reviewed and approved by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Board finds that no rare or endangered species are identified as being directly impacted by the operation and that mitigation measures addressing fisheries impacts are also applicable to wildlife generally.

[58] The Board further finds that no concerns were raised by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Department of Natural Resources, or the Canadian Wildlife Service with respect to species at risk or endangered species.

[59] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the proposed operation is not likely to result in unacceptable adverse effects on other users of the public waters of Whycomomagh Bay, and that this factor weighs in favour of the Application.

**(e) The public right of navigation**

[60] The Board has considered whether the proposed aquacultural operation affects the public right of navigation and finds that the evidence establishes it does not.

[61] The Board finds that Transport Canada reviewed the Application through the Network Partner consultation process and raised no concerns with respect to navigation. The Board further finds that Transport Canada advised that approval under the Canadian Navigable Waters Act is required, and is to be administered through the Navigation Protection Program.

[62] The Board finds that the We'koqma'q First Nation has submitted the required Notices of Works, under the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, for each of the proposed sites, and that those approvals remain pending, subject to the outcome of this proceeding.

[63] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the proposed operation does not interfere with the public right of navigation and that compliance with the Canadian Navigable Waters Act provides an appropriate regulatory mechanism to address navigational interests. This factor therefore weighs in favour of the Application.

**(f) The sustainability of wild salmon**

[64] The Board has considered evidence respecting the sustainability of wild salmon in the area of the proposed aquacultural operation, as addressed in the Development Plans.

[65] The Board finds that the Farm is located in Salmon Fishing Area 19, an area that supports recreational catch-and-release salmon fishing and a Food, Social and Ceremonial salmon fishery. The Board further finds that several rivers within Salmon Fishing Area 19 support wild salmon populations and that the Skye River is the only river with a wild salmon population that directly connects to Whycocomagh Bay.

[66] The Board finds that provincial salmon enhancement programs are in place for other river systems connected to St. Patrick's Channel and that approval of the Application is not expected to affect those enhancement efforts. The Board also finds that the Province's longstanding Rainbow trout enhancement program in Whycocomagh Bay, demonstrates an absence of concern that the presence of trout adversely affects the sustainability of wild salmon.

[67] The Board finds that the Proponent's operational procedures are designed to mitigate potential risks of finfish aquaculture to wild salmon, including risks associated with fish escape, disease transmission, biosecurity, and environmental effects. These matters are addressed through regulatory requirements and mitigation measures discussed in relation to fisheries in the Bay.

[68] The Board finds that the low-salinity conditions of Whycocomagh Bay, are not conducive to the proliferation of sea lice, and that this reduces the likelihood of sea lice affecting wild salmon populations.

[69] The Board has considered the advice provided by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which identified trout escape as a potential stressor to wild salmon through disease transmission, predation, or competition for space and food, but did not recommend additional mitigation measures. The Board finds that federal transfer licensing requirements prohibit the movement of fish with diseases, that may be harmful to wild fish, thereby providing an additional safeguard for wild salmon.

[70] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the proposed aquacultural operation is not likely to pose a risk to wild salmon or to the sustainability of wild salmon populations, and that this factor weighs in favour of the Application.

**(g) the number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in the public waters surrounding the proposed aquaculture operation.**

[71] The Board has considered evidence respecting the number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in the public waters of Whycomomagh Bay, as addressed in the Development Plans.

[72] The Board finds that the We'koqma'q First Nation is the leaseholder and licence holder for all aquaculture sites within Whycomomagh Bay, including both finfish and shellfish operations, and that there are no other aquaculture operators in the waters directly connected to the Bay.

[73] The Board finds that the three finfish aquaculture sites in the Bay, identified as AQ#0814x, AQ#1430, and AQ#1431, are proposed to be managed as a single integrated farm. The Board finds that this approach is intended to support coordinated production planning, and optimal fallowing regimes across the sites.

[74] The Board further finds that the We'koqma'q First Nation owns and operates two shellfish aquaculture sites in Whycomomagh Bay, AQ#1291 and AQ#1295, for the cultivation of oysters, and that only AQ#1291 is currently operational.

[75] On the evidence before it, the Board finds that the number and productivity of other aquaculture sites in Whycomomagh Bay are known, finite, and managed under a single operator, and that the proposed operation does not result in cumulative aquaculture pressures inconsistent with coordinated site management. The Board finds that this factor weighs in favour of the Application.

**Conclusion**

[76] For the reasons set out above, the Board finds that the proposed operation is a low-impact, high-value aquaculture undertaking that is consistent with the objectives of economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental sustainability.

[77] The Board is satisfied that the proposed farm represents the optimum use of marine resources, occupies only a limited portion of Whycomomagh Bay, and is expected to make a positive and sustained contribution to the provincial economy. For these reasons, as well as the reasons outlined in this decision, the Board approves the applications made by WFN Fish Farm Limited Partnership for a boundary amendment to AQ#0814X and for two new marine finfish aquaculture licences and leases, AQ#1430 and AQ#1431, for the cultivation of rainbow trout in Whycomomagh Bay, Inverness County.

DATED at Halifax, Nova Scotia this 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.



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Damien Barry, Chair



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Bruce Morrison, Board Member



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Roger Percy, Board Member