

May 20, 2025

To: Federal and Provincial Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries

Dear Ministers:

On behalf of Canada's seafood farming community, we thank you for your work and your commitment to your provinces and to Canada. As leaders in the aquaculture sector, we commit ourselves to working with you to create lasting value and flourishing communities through our sector across Canada.

The future of seafood development in Canada and across the world is dependent on human ingenuity to find new ways to responsibly create value from our oceans, to innovate to produce more, secure and affordable seafood to support Canadians and the world.

We have a special responsibility in Canada with some of the greatest biophysical capacity on the planet. With highly skilled people, and many coastal communities waiting for new opportunities and renewal, precision farming of our waters is a unique blessing for Canada.

It is time to move beyond Canada's mediocre performance. For over twenty years Canada has flatlined in aquaculture production growth while using only a small fragment of our potential. We need a new vision and government leadership to support us to the next level of production and excellence in aquaculture production. You are the leaders that can and must be bold to achieve this.

We ask you to undertake a pathway that allows for a new approach to aquaculture development in Canada. We propose the following areas of action to you as the foundations for a new springtime in seafood development and coastal community revitalization.

1) Science Must Be the Foundation

Science must be re-established as foundational for aquaculture development. A re-commitment to objective scientific advice as the foundation for policy decisions is necessary. All human activity has some degree of environmental risk, and there is no such thing as zero risk. Putting off economic development risks the health of people, families and communities. Governments must be clear on acceptable levels of environmental risk to make predictable and reasonable decisions for project development.

2) The BC “Open Net Pen” Ban Must Be Removed

The 2024 federal decision to ban salmon farming net pens by 2029 is scientifically, economically and technologically irresponsible. It has cast an investment chill on all of Canada and we are seeing its negative influence around the world. As salmon farming investment decisions in BC for 2029 are approaching quickly, the ban must be removed urgently in favour of a clear performance-based pathway that establishes stabilization, future growth and attracts investment in innovation and new technologies.

3) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Must be the Federal Aquaculture Champion

DFO is a regulator and habitat protector. It is not equipped to support a modern, growth-oriented farming sector. It is time for a change. AAFC must be named the lead federal department for sector development, while DFO and CFIA continue to be regulators of the sector. Aquaculture must finally be included in federal legislation as a farming activity consistent with international definitions.

4) Modernize Shellfish Sector Management and Risk Supports

The shellfish aquaculture sector holds significant economic, environmental, and food security potential across Canada. However, its growth is constrained by outdated federal oversight, particularly under the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP), and by the sector’s exclusion from essential risk management tools available to other forms of food production. A modernized approach is needed — one that ensures effective, coordinated delivery of public health protections while also enabling access to government-industry programs that provide stability and resilience for producers.

To move this forward, we request federal support for a pilot crop insurance program for shellfish aquaculture in Prince Edward Island, with the goal of informing a national approach to business risk management program access for shellfish farmers in all producing provinces.

We ask you: provide a positive signal that aquaculture is an important part of Canada’s future and together begin building a united vision for this future.

For our part, we will increase our efforts to build public trust and constantly improve our practices.

We can together build a sector that leads the world with job creation, skilled workers, Indigenous economic and reconciliation opportunities, low-carbon, healthy and affordable home-grown protein production, and renewed coastal communities.

This is an exciting time and challenge. The time is now for positive and lasting change to benefit your provinces and all of Canada.

Sincerely,



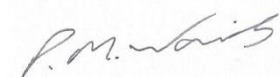
Timothy J. Kennedy
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Keith Currie
President
Canadian Federation of
Agriculture



Keith Sullivan
Executive Director
NL Aquaculture Industry
Association



Peter Warris
Executive Director
PEI Aquaculture Alliance



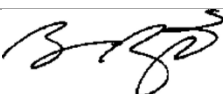
Jeff Bishop
Executive Director
Aquaculture Association of Nova
Scotia



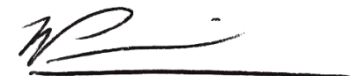
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