



FEB 06 2018

Mr. Peter Luckham
Chair
Islands Trust Council
< pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca >

Dear Mr. Luckham:

Thank you for your correspondence of January 2, 2018, regarding the Integrated Geoduck Management Framework (IGMF) and potential environmental impacts related to geoduck aquaculture. I appreciate you raising these concerns and the proposed research on behalf of the Islands Trust Council.

The development of the IGMF included more than two years of engagement with First Nations, the public, industry, the Province of British Columbia and local governmental agencies. As you note, the Framework is intended to balance expanded opportunity for subtidal geoduck aquaculture in British Columbia while maintaining the economic prosperity and long-term sustainability of the wild geoduck fishery. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is implementing geoduck aquaculture under the Framework's four core principles:

- Conservation;
- Obligations to First Nations;
- Economic Prosperity and Sustainable Use; and
- Transparency.

The IGMF website outlines licence conditions for shellfish aquaculture and monitoring measures for geoduck aquaculture. Many of these licence conditions are aimed at mitigating potential risks to the environment resulting from geoduck aquaculture.

Prior to approval of the IGMF, extensive research was conducted in relation to potential disease and genetic and ecological risks associated with geoduck aquaculture. These studies included research by DFO Science on the effects of geoduck harvest on the seabed. It was determined that benthic impacts of small-scale geoduck out-planting and small-to large-scale harvesting were relatively minor and limited in duration and scale. This research and several other studies on geoduck aquaculture can be found at Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat and Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development.

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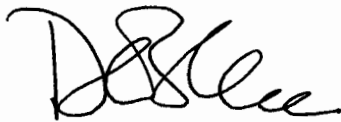
The IGMF includes new siting guidelines for subtidal (deep water) culture only. Applications for intertidal geoduck aquaculture have always been accepted for review by DFO. That said, the combination of challenges related to geography, the suitability of British Columbia beaches and the current level of aquaculture production in Baynes Sound, means the Department does not anticipate an increase in applications for intertidal geoduck aquaculture.

More broadly, DFO is committed to being open and transparent in its regulation and management of aquaculture in British Columbia. Information on advisory processes that support public engagement and consultation is available at <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/aquaculture/index-eng.html>. If the Islands' Trust has concerns relating to aquaculture policy, management or additional proposals for research, you may wish to bring these concerns to the Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee (AMAC) through your local government representative appointed by the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities. Concerns from First Nations can be brought to their representatives on the AMAC. In the meantime, I have forwarded your recommendation regarding additional research on cumulative impacts to the officials of our DFO Science Branch and Aquaculture Management Division in the Pacific Region.

If you have further questions or would like to discuss your concerns with DFO staff in more detail, you can reach Corey Jackson, Acting Director, Aquaculture Management Division, by email at Corey.Jackson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or by telephone at 604-666-7009.

Again, thank you again for writing and for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', written in a cursive style.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard