# THE FUTURE OF SHELLFISH REGULATION

A regulatory reality check

# A SECTOR OPERATING IN A COMPLEX REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Shellfish aquaculture sits at the intersection of several public-interest responsibilities.

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| **MARINE ACCESS** | Tenures, licensing, navigation and use of public space |
| **FOOD SAFETY** | Growing-water classification, monitoring, closures and market access |
| **ENVIRONMENT** | Cumulative effects, habitat, pollution prevention and ecosystem health |
| **BUSINESS VIABILITY** | Labour, investment, infrastructure and operational certainty |

# WHAT GROWERS ARE EXPERIENCING

The issue is not simply the existence of regulation. It is the experience of navigating it.

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| **LICENSING UNCERTAINTY** | Long timelines, backlogs and uncertainty around tenure renewal |
| **FOOD-SAFETY DISRUPTION** | Closures and market impacts, including the challenges of responding to norovirus and other risks |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL EXPECTATIONS** | Increasing attention to cumulative effects, with questions about data, indicators and process |
| **OPERATING PRESSURES** | Labour availability, infrastructure constraints and limited room to adapt |

**Uncertainty has a cost — even when no single decision is unreasonable.**

# REGULATION MATTERS — SO DOES HOW IT WORKS

The question is not whether regulation is necessary. It is whether the system is delivering effectively.

### WHAT REGULATION MUST DO

- Protect public health
- Safeguard the marine environment
- Maintain public and market confidence
- Provide fair and accountable oversight

### WHAT INDUSTRY ALSO NEEDS

- Clear and consistent requirements
- Timely, transparent decisions
- Evidence-informed and proportionate responses
- Coordination across departments and agencies

# A PRACTICAL REALITY CHECK

Five tests we should be able to apply to the regulatory system.

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| **CLARITY** | Are roles, requirements and decision pathways understood? |
| **COORDINATION** | Are agencies working from a shared understanding of the issue? |
| **EVIDENCE** | Are decisions informed by relevant data and current science? |
| **PROPORTIONALITY** | Does the response match the nature and level of risk? |
| **TIMELINESS** | Are decisions made within timeframes that allow businesses to operate and plan? |

# WHAT THIS CONVERSATION IS — AND ISN'T

Let's keep the discussion constructive, strategic and useful.

### THIS IS

- A discussion about system-wide challenges
- An opportunity to understand regulatory perspectives
- A chance to identify practical improvements
- A forward-looking conversation

### THIS IS NOT

- A forum to adjudicate individual licence files
- A troubleshooting session for one farm
- A debate about whether regulation should exist
- An opportunity to assign blame

# FROM REALITY CHECK TO PRACTICAL CHANGE

What would a better regulatory environment look like — and what can we do to get there?

1. Where are the biggest opportunities to improve coordination and predictability?
2. What practical changes could be made over the next 12–24 months?
3. How can industry and regulators improve the evidence and information used to make decisions?
4. How will we know whether things are getting better?

**Effective regulation should protect the public interest — and enable responsible industry to thrive.**