

## **TIANS Statement Regarding Proposed Aquaculture Development Sites**

TIANS has been asked to review our position regarding the development and implementation of open pen finfish operations in Nova Scotia. The request has come as a result of recent site applications near or in well-established coastal tourism areas where there is growing opposition from numerous community groups concerned with the environmental and tourism impact around this type of activity.

In February 2013, following review of a commissioned research paper, TIANS released an earlier position on this topic which focused on the potential impacts of this type of aquaculture for the Province. In early January 2020 an update of this document was prepared for consideration by the TIANS Board.

TIANS continues to maintain the principles outlined in the original 2013 position. Any decisions made regarding aquaculture operations must include consideration for the possible negative impact upon the tourism industry which is Nova Scotia's largest service export. In 2018, tourism generated \$2.61 billion in the province and accounted for over \$300 million in tax revenues. According to Stats Canada, over 40,000 Nova Scotians are employed in the sector. The tourism industry in Nova Scotia is committed to growing revenues to reach the \$4B target identified in the Ivany Report and there is a great deal of concern that an expanded open-pen fin fishery could threaten the viability of this valuable sector and the brand of the province as a destination.

The viability of hundreds of small tourism businesses across Nova Scotia is dependent on the sea and coastal experiences. Recreational and eco-tourism activities are two of the fastest growing sectors of tourism, both of which depend upon a healthy and accessible coast. People are attracted to the province in large part by our beautiful and pristine coastlines. Regulatory policy and decisions which do not value the health or protection of our marine ecosystems could quickly translate into fewer travellers and lost tourism revenues. As well as recognizing the impact on tourism as a key factor when considering new site location applications, TIANS upholds the key principle in the original 2013 position statement:

- *closed containment finfish and small-scale shellfish operations provide the most responsible practices for development in Nova Scotia. A future focus on these types of operations would be more sustainable for the province over the long haul and minimize the impact upon other industries.*

In summary, regulatory and licensing decisions around finfish operations in Nova Scotia should prioritize and support land-based developments. This would demonstrate government's understanding of the significant and growing contribution of Nova Scotia's tourism industry to the overall health of the provincial economy.

As the Province's voice for Tourism, TIANS will continue to support policies which protect the natural environment and defend the well-being and sustainability of the tourism industry.