
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

TENURE FEE REDUCTION TO BOOST SHELLFISH OPPORTUNITIES

COMOX – A reduction in fees for shellfish tenure applications will help the industry take advantage of expansion opportunities – particularly in smaller, remote communities, Minister of Agriculture and Lands Pat Bell announced today.

Before the fee reduction, applicants were charged almost \$5,000 to file a new tenure application and almost \$2,500 to renew an existing tenure. A 2003 government report found those fees were the highest of any comparable jurisdiction. The fee for a new tenure is now \$1,200 and a renewal application will be half the cost of a new tenure fee.

“Shellfish aquaculture is important to the well-being of a number of coastal communities, supporting between 700 and 1,000 jobs,” Bell said. “In reducing application fees for new and replacement tenures, the industry will be able to expand existing production and attract new producers, including First Nations.”

In recognition of the importance of the shellfish industry, particularly to central Vancouver Island coastal communities, the K’omox First Nation and the B.C. Shellfish Growers’ Association (BCSGA) partnered last week to present the inaugural Comox Valley Shellfish Festival. The week-long festival included events around the Comox Valley, visits to shellfish farms and processing facilities, entertainment and a gala dinner.

“It was fitting that the Comox Valley – home to B.C.’s shellfish industry – hosted this event,” BCSGA executive director Roberta Stevenson said. “Our coastal communities are benefiting from the growing demand for shellfish and today’s announcement on tenure fees is most welcome.”

B.C.’s shellfish aquaculture industry is worth about \$32 million annually. Its main products are oysters, clams and mussels. A 1997 study showed B.C.’s shellfish industry has the potential to become a \$100 million industry with over 1,000 new jobs.

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