

Fish Processing Licensing Board
Annual Performance Report 2025

Letter from the Chairperson

In accordance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to transparency and accountability and on behalf of the Fish Processing Licensing Board (the Board), I am pleased to submit our 2025 Annual Report. The Board is classified as a category three public body under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and is required to report annually on its performance to the House of Assembly. My signature below, on behalf of the entire Board, signifies the Board's accountability for the actual results reported.

During 2025, the Board fulfilled its mandate to review and make public recommendations on fish processing licensing applications or requests made to the former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, now Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. In doing so, the Board reviewed 15 applications including a combination of carry-overs, appeals and new submissions in accordance with provincial legislation and the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual.

Through our adherence to provincial legislation, consideration of all comments and information received from various stakeholders, and by following the established policies and procedures set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Manual, we have diligently assessed the processing licensing applications and appeals. Decisions above have been rendered with careful consideration of the current needs and long-term viability of the industry. The outcomes are intended to support and contribute to the continued stability, growth, and effective management of the provincial fishery and it's anticipated that decisions made will contribute positively to rural communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador supporting economic activity and community stability.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Carter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William (Bill) Carter
Chairperson
Fish Processing Licensing Board

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1.0 Overview

The Board is an arms-length government entity that provides an open and transparent decision-making process for fish processing licensing that is accountable to the public.

Applicants for a fish processing licence must advertise in both a generally circulated and a regional newspaper to allow the opportunity for interested members of the public to provide comments to the Board for consideration. It is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate the viability of their proposed venture and to comply with all applicable legislation, regulation and policy guidelines.

The Board makes recommendations to the Minister and the Minister makes the final decision on all licensing matters. The Board's recommendations to the Minister are made public, as are the final decisions of the Minister. To ensure equity and impartiality, all new Board members go through a merit-based process administered by the Public Service Commission and are formally appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

As of December 31, 2025, there were 87 active fish processing plants in the province, which included 68 licenses for primary processing, two licenses for secondary processing, six licenses for aquaculture processing and 11 licenses for in-province retail processing.

1.1 Vision

The vision of the Board is to provide an equitable and impartial assessment of fish processing licence applications submitted to the Department. Through this work, the Board supports the vision of the department.

1.2 Mandate

The mandate of the Board is to make public recommendations on all fish processing licence proposals or requests made to the Board. Routine renewal of fish processing licences is exempt from this process. In keeping with its mandate, the Board's main objectives are to assess and make recommendations to the Minister regarding:

- Licensing applications, including applications for new licences, change of operator, and the consolidation and transfer of fish processing licences;
- Applications for the addition of new species to existing fish processing licences and, where appropriate, recommendations regarding licensing on a regional basis;
- Corporate concentration, merger, and acquisition issues in the context of fish processing licensing matters; and
- Appeals to reinstate licences cancelled because of not meeting the activity requirements outlined in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual.

The Board is also subject to other objectives which the Minister may determine. For other related powers and duties of the Board, please refer to Appendix A.

1.3 Lines of Business

The Board reviews requests for new fish processing licences made to the Board, transfer of licences, change of operators and the addition of species to existing licences. The department provides licensing policies and procedures to the Board to guide this process. The Board makes recommendations to the Minister who ultimately makes the final decision on all licensing matters.

For additional information regarding licensing policies and procedures, please visit the Department's website at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fisheries/>. See also the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/fisheries/agencies-boards-and-commissions/board/>

1.4 Composition of the Board

As specified in the Act, the membership of the Board consists of five members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. One member is designated as the Chairperson of the Board by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and one member is elected Vice-Chairperson of the Board by an internal vote of Board members. Board members are appointed for a period of four years and may continue to serve until reappointed or replaced. Members are expected to understand, but have no affiliation with, the fishing industry.

As of December 31, 2025, the Board was comprised of the following members:

Name	Title	Region	Appointment Date	Expiry Date
William Carter	Chairperson	Central	6/15/2023	6/15/2027
Taylor Colbourne ¹	Vice-Chairperson	Western	8/27/2020	8/27/2024
George Reid ¹	Member	Western	2/4/2019	2/4/2023
Jerome Ward ¹	Member	Northern	2/4/2019	2/4/2023

¹ In accordance with the Act, members can continue to serve until appointed or replaced. A merit-based process is underway to address members with a term of appointment that has expired.

1.5 Secretariat to the Board

The Licensing, Inspection and Quality Assurance Division (LIQA) of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (FA) serves as the Secretariat to the Board. The duties and responsibilities of the Secretariat include but are not limited to: all administrative functions; review of all applications; and providing background information to the Board for use in its deliberations.

The Director of Licensing, Inspection and Quality Assurance or designate acts as the Recording Secretary for the Board. The Recording Secretary is responsible for preparing and distributing the minutes of all meetings, as well as compiling a record of the Board's recommendations. The recommendations are signed by the Chairperson of the Board and then submitted through the Secretariat to the Minister for consideration and rendering of a final decision.

This report is available in alternate formats. An alternate format can be obtained by contacting the Secretariat at the following address:

Director, Licensing, Inspection and Quality Assurance
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
30 Strawberry Marsh Road
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
keithjewer@gov.nl.ca

1.6 Physical Location/Regional Representation

The Secretariat to the Board is in St. John's; however, Board meetings are held throughout the year and may be held at different locations. Meetings of the Board may be conducted by teleconference, videoconference, or by other means, provided that all members may participate simultaneously. Three Board members are necessary to establish a quorum, one of whom must be the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson. Meetings are held to review applications or to consider requests related to an application. Members of the Board are selected with a consideration of gender balance and regional distribution.

1.7 Primary Clients

In working towards its mandate, the Board identifies individuals or groups whose needs have a key influence on the Board's business. As such, the Board identifies the following as its primary clients:

- The Minister;
- Fish processors;
- Fish buyers; and
- The people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

1.8 Financial Information

The Board is funded by FA. This funding is used to cover travel costs, remuneration of Board members (according to Treasury Board guidelines) as well as any other miscellaneous costs associated with meetings. Where possible, the Board operates on a cost-recovery basis through application fees.

In 2025, remuneration costs for Board members totaled \$15,023; travel expenses incurred totaled \$13,843. The fees associated with the applications reviewed by the board in 2025 totaled \$30,000.

2.0 Highlights and Partnerships

In 2025, the Board provided information and advice to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture regarding applications and appeals related to fish processing licensing. Part of this work included collaboration with key stakeholders both internal and external to government.

3.0 Report on Performance

The Board reviews fish processing applications and requests in accordance with the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual and the **Fish Processing Licensing Board Act** (Act), considering any feedback from the applicant's public advertising of the application, information provided by FA and information provided by other government departments and agencies. The Board also can hold public meetings, if necessary.

As stated in the Act, Section 10(2)(c):

"The Board shall, after considering the application, make a recommendation to the minister regarding that application, including its reasons for that recommendation."

The Act also states in Section 11:

"The minister shall consider a recommendation of the board made to him or her under paragraph 10(2)(c) and shall, following his or her decision with respect to the application, release both the recommendation of the board and his or her decision regarding the application first to the applicant and then to the public."

Issue: Fish Processing Licences

Objective: By December 31, 2025, the Fish Processing Licensing Board will have made recommendations to the Minister on matters pertaining to fish processing licences.

Indicator:

- Assessed applications and made recommendations, as required for new licences; change of operator of an existing licence; addition of new species to an existing licence; transfers; and appeals.

In 2025, the Board met on four occasions: May 6-7 (in-person); June 25 (conference call); September 17 (in-person); and December 9 (in person). They assessed applications and made recommendations:

For New Licences- In 2025, there was one application for a new fish processing licence reviewed. T.M.B. Seafoods Inc., Plum Point for a new primary fish processing licence for lobster. The Board recommended approval. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.

For Change of Operator of an Existing Licence - In 2025, there were three applications for change of operator of an existing licence reviewed.

1. Codroy Seafoods Inc., Codroy, the species authorizations included salmonids (aquaculture), scallop, lobster, lumpfish and groundfish (all species). The Board recommended approval. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.
2. 16771408 Canada Inc., Glovertown, the species authorizations included pelagics (all species), groundfish (all species), sea urchin, salmonids (AQ), snow crab and eel. The Board recommended approval for all species, excluding snow crab. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.
3. Sansome's Seafood Ltd, Hillgrade, the species authorizations included lobster and squid. The Board recommended approval. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.

For Addition of New Species to an Existing Licence - Adding a new species on an existing licence may utilize excess capacity, which may contribute to improved efficiency and enable the enterprise to be more competitive in the marketplace. The Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual outlines the criteria an application must meet for approval. In 2025, the Board reviewed six applications for the addition of a species category to an existing licence as shown below that were carried over from 2024.

1. St. Anthony Seafoods, St. Anthony: Application to add the species sea cucumber and lobster to an existing primary processing licence. The board recommended approving lobster and did not recommend sea cucumber. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendations.
2. HSF Ocean Products Incorporated, O'Donnell's: Application to add the species snow crab and sea urchin to an existing primary processing licence, the board

recommended approving the addition of both species. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.

3. Dandy Dan's Fish Market, Ship Harbour: Application to add the species sea cucumber and whelk to an existing primary processing licence. The Board recommended approval of sea cucumber with a restriction on purchases of not exceeding one million pounds in round weight form and recommended approval of whelk. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation for Whelk, however denied the recommendation for sea cucumber.
4. St. Mary's Bay Fisheries Inc., St. Mary's: Application to add the species lobster to an existing primary processing licence. The Board recommended approval. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.
5. Gould Fisheries Ltd, River of Ponds: Application to add the species group pelagics (all species) to an existing primary processing licence. The Board recommended approval. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.
6. Gulf Shrimp Limited, Baie Verte: Application to add the species lumpfish to an existing primary processing licence. The Board recommended not approving. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation.

For Transfers - A licence transfer is the movement of one or more species category from one fish processing facility to another, resulting in the elimination of those species or species groups from the originating licence. In 2025, the Board did not review any applications for licence transfer.

For Appeals - An appeal is a process for requesting a formal change to an official decision. All appeals are directed to the Board for consideration when the licence holder has lost a species authorization due to inactivity (no reported production) or does not meet the minimum production requirements set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual. When appealing a decision, the applicant is not required to advertise. In 2025, the Board received five appeal requests as shown below and the Minister accepted the Board's recommendation on all five appeals.

1. Dandy Dan's Fish Market Limited, Ship Harbour: Primary Licence Appeal - for the reinstatement of pelagics (all species) and crab other, to their fish processing licence. The Licence holder did not meet the minimum production requirements specified in section 1.6 as set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual. The Board recommended reinstatement of both species to the fish processing licence.
2. Ocean Choice International, St. Lawrence: Primary Licence Appeal - for the reinstatement of pelagics (all species), to their fish processing licence. The Licence holder did not meet the minimum production requirements specified in section 1.6 as set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual for

pelagics, all species. The Board recommended reinstatement of pelagics (all species) to the fish processing licence.

3. Quin Sea Fisheries Limited, Cape Broyle: Primary Licence Appeal - for the reinstatement of pelagics (all species), to their fish processing licence. The Licence holder did not meet the minimum production requirements specified in section 1.6 as set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual for pelagics, all species. The Board recommended reinstatement of pelagics (all species) to the fish processing licence.
4. Hodder's Shellfish Inc., Stoneville: Primary Licence Appeal - for the reinstatement of groundfish (all species), to their fish processing licence. The Licence holder did not meet the minimum production requirements specified in section 1.6 as set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual. The Board recommended reinstatement of groundfish (all species) to the fish processing licence.
5. Skipper's Quality Seafoods Inc., Petty Harbour: Primary Licence Appeal - for the reinstatement of groundfish (all species), to their fish processing licence. The Licence holder did not meet the minimum production requirements specified in section 1.6 as set out in the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual. The Board recommended reinstatement of groundfish (all species) to the fish processing licence.

4.0 Opportunities and Challenges

The fishing industry remains an important economic driver in Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly in rural areas, and contributes to the ongoing viability of coastal communities. Challenges exist in the Newfoundland and Labrador fishing industry. The past two decades have resulted in a significant downsizing of the industry and this trend is expected to continue.

In addition to the workforce challenges, several internal factors exist in the fish processing sector, impeding plant viability and competitiveness, including resource uncertainty, seasonality/timing of supply, and aging infrastructure. Compounding these internal challenges is a series of external factors that are having a negative impact on the industry, including tariffs barriers, exchange rate fluctuations, and competition from low-cost producers. Furthermore, an environmental shift over the past decade is having a notable impact on the province's marine ecosystem. Warmer water temperatures appear to be a major factor in the decline in shellfish resources in certain areas around the province but are having a positive impact on the province's groundfish resources. The province's fishing industry, once very dependent on groundfish, has been focused

on shellfish for much of the last two decades, and any future shift in focus on resources will represent a challenge.

In light of the opportunities and challenges facing the fishing industry, the FPLB has fulfilled its mandate to make recommendations on submitted requests in 2025.

Annex A: Powers and Duties of the Board

Fish Processing Licensing Board Act

9. (1) The board shall

- (a) consider an application for a fish processing licence which has been properly made to it, including an application for a new licence, a consolidated licence or a transfer of licence;
- (b) consider an application made to it under this Act which it is authorized to consider;
- (c) consider a matter referred to it by the minister, where that matter is of one of general application which does not refer specifically to a particular fish processing licence;
- (d) consider an application related to corporate concentration, merger and acquisition issues in the context of fish processing licensing matters; and
- (e) after considering a matter referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d), make a recommendation, including its reasons for that recommendation, to the minister with respect to a course of action on that matter.

(2) The board may

- (a) request that the minister provide professional or technical assistance or advice required by it to make its recommendations to the minister; and
- (b) generally, do those other things that are necessary to fulfil its mandate and make the required recommendations to the minister regarding an application under this Act.

Source: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/f12-01.htm>