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May 7, 2026

Chief Chris George & Council  
Eel River Bar First Nation  
11 Main Street, Unit 201  
Eel River Bar, NB  
E8C 1A1

Dear Chief George and Councillors:

We would like to clarify information regarding the nearby shellfish harvesting area has been circulating among community members. We understand that this shellfish area has been closed to harvesting for a number of years and recognize that this traditional harvesting area is of great importance to the members of the Eel River Bar First Nation (ERBFN).

These closures have been discussed on numerous occasions with the ERBFN council, the Fisheries Working Group, and with community members. To ensure clarity, I would like to outline how these areas are managed. Shellfish harvesting openings and closures in the Bay of Chaleurs are governed by the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP). This program relies on scientific monitoring and a partnership between several federal Department which are

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC): Monitors marine water quality and assesses potential sources of contamination.
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA): Conducts testing for marine biotoxins and evaluates food safety risks.
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO): Responsible for issuing and enforcing shellfish harvesting closures and communicating these decisions to the public

Ongoing program efforts include ECCC continually assessing classifications of shellfish harvesting areas across Atlantic Canada. In this context, "declassification" reflects a change in monitoring status due to improvements in contamination sources or shifting water quality conditions; however, declassification does not in itself lead reopening a harvest area, but rather represents one step within a broader, comprehensive safety process.

At this time, ECCC has not yet provided a assessment of their dataset to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in order to determining next steps for this shellfish harvest area.

We value the cultural, social, and economic importance of shellfish harvesting to Eel River Bar First Nation, particularly along the Bay of Chaleurs. Please be assured that decisions regarding closures and reopenings are never taken lightly. Our commitment remains to protect public health while ensuring transparent communication and respectful engagement with your community.

The Fisheries Working Group, established with your First Nation several years ago, remains a vital forum for open dialogue. This partnership helps reduce ambiguity and ensures we are working toward common goals regarding fisheries management.

DFO remains open and willing to meet with Chief and Council at any time to discuss this matter further or to address any questions or concerns. I want to re-affirm our sincere desire to continue working in close co-operation with ERBFN.

Respectfully,



Luc Légère  
Eastern New Brunswick Area Director

cc: Ronald Simonson