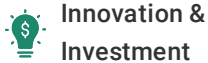




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# Canadian government aid to boost Cape Breton oyster farming industry

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

## Development of a land-based oyster hatchery could help bring back the oyster farming industry on Bras d'Or Lake

On May 27, 2022, the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia announced \$2 million in funding support to help the **Verschuren Centre for Sustainability in Energy and the Environment** (<http://www.verschurencentre.ca/>) (the Centre) develop a land-based oyster hatchery. Once open, the hatchery will prepare broodstock and provide healthy seed, followed by facility decontamination of equipment and water, which prevents the unnecessary spread of the multinuclear sphere unknown (or MSX) parasite between oyster aquaculture sites.

The federal government will provide 70 percent of the funding, with 30 percent coming from the Atlantic provinces. The project seeks to address two priorities for Nova Scotia oyster growers: finding a way to address concerns and the spread of the MSX parasite and a lack of oyster seed. The lab-based process established at the Centre will reduce parasite prevalence and intensity in MSX-infected oysters resulting in almost zero mortality.

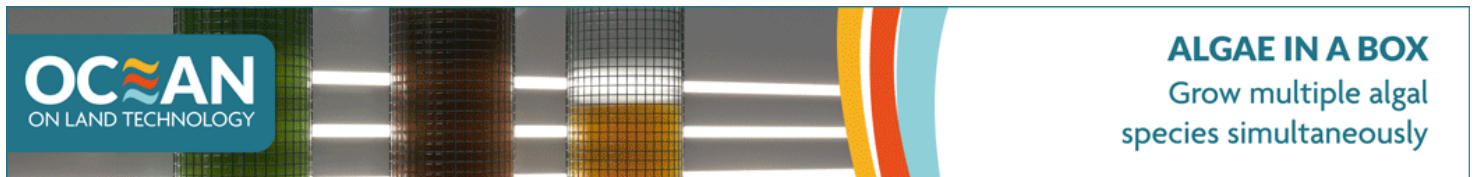
"For oyster producers in Cape Breton on the Bras d'Or Lake, this work is especially welcome as the oyster industry in that area has been devastated by the MSX parasite," wrote the federal government in a **press release** (<https://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2022/05/government-of-canada-and-province-of-nova-scotia-help-support-the-redevelopment-of-the-oyster-industry-in-bras-dor-lake.html>). "Healthy, parasite-free oyster larvae from the Centre will allow the once rich oyster industry on the Bras d'Or Lakes to rebuild and return much needed economic stability to the local community."

At one time, Bras d'Or Lake accounted for approximately 80 percent of oyster landings in Nova Scotia. But twenty years ago, the MSX parasite began causing mass mortalities in the oyster population of the Bras d'Or Lake, leading



The Canadian government is providing \$2 million to help revitalize the Cape Breton oyster farming industry destroyed by MSX parasite. Shutterstock image.

the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada to close the estuary to oyster farming. It remained closed for two decades, but this funding for the Centre could help bring back the oyster farming industry and benefit local and regional economies in Nova Scotia “now and in the future.”



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“Atlantic Fisheries Fund support for this project will truly deliver community and industry benefits to leaseholders in the Bras D’Or Lake Biosphere,” said Beth Mason, President and CEO of the Centre. “The revitalization of this key shellfish sector – through a novel mitigation strategy, seed nursery and hatchery – will enrich this world-renowned jewel for all who live, work and depend upon it for their livelihood.”



## Could floating cages revitalize an oyster farming industry decimated by the MSX parasite?

Study says floating cages could help revitalize the Cape Breton oyster farming industry destroyed by MSX parasite 20 years earlier.



Global Seafood Alliance

The contribution comes from the \$400 million Atlantic Fisheries Fund, jointly funded by the federal and provincial governments, and focuses on increasing opportunities and market value for sustainably sourced, high-quality fish and seafood products from Atlantic Canada.

“The Atlantic Fisheries Fund is enabling innovative ways to harvest, process and deliver high-quality, sustainably sourced fish and seafood from the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors,” said the Honourable Joyce Murray, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. “The exciting work happening at the Verschuren Centre is key to the revitalization of a once-thriving oyster industry in the Bras d’Or Lake, and a welcome infusion of high-quality oyster into Nova Scotia’s fish and seafood sector.”

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