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Media Release

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In Landmark Deal, Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Communities Partner for Economic Development in Commercial Fishery

Membertou, N.S – Thirteen Mi'kmaq communities from across Nova Scotia announced they are coming together for a significant opportunity to participate in the commercial fishery. An announcement made by Chief Terrance Paul, Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs Co-Chair, speaking on behalf of the thirteen nations, said the thirteen bands are working together and have submitted an application for the surf clam license.

“The Mi'kmaq Chiefs are excited and hopeful for this historic opportunity for our people. We hope it is the start of meaningful nation-to-nation reconciliation, new jobs and training, and a better future for our people,” said Chief Terrance J. Paul.

The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia submitted the proposal to the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans in response to his recent call for new entrants.

“We believe we have a very good chance of success with our application, Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw communities are adjacent to the clam resource and our application will ensure benefits from the fishery are shared among these communities.” Chief Paul said referring to the majority of the resource being located off the shores of Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq also announced they are partnering with industry leaders, Clearwater Seafoods on the application, but confirm that Clearwater will act only as an operating partner and the license will be 100% Mi'kmaq owned. Working with an established operator in this fishery follows a proven economic development model used by many of the thirteen communities in other industry sectors for the benefit of all communities.

The proposal includes employment and training opportunities for Mi'kmaq, economic development across the province, and an operational partnership with Clearwater Seafoods beginning January 1, 2018. If implemented the total value of a Mi'kmaw license would exceed \$315 million for Mi'kmaw communities.

Rex Matthews, Mayor of Grand Bank who knows the critical impact of the Minister's announcement on the Town of Grand Bank where Clearwater's plant is located commented,

“This is an approach that the Town of Grand Bank can support. It protects the all-important jobs in our community where Clearwater is the primary employer. If successful, this proposal represents a fair resolution for all involved and meets the government’s stated objectives.”

The Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq proposal has the potential to impact 20,000 Mi’kmaq across the province of Nova Scotia. The economic benefits of the historic deal would be felt from Acadia First Nation to Membertou First Nation and eleven communities in between. Unlike other First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada, this would be the first opportunity for the Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq to access the opportunity for offshore commercial fishery.

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