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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Release

**Thirteen Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs Call for Immediate Review on Arctic Surf Clam Licence**

**MILLBROOK, NS** – The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (Assembly), which represents thirteen communities across the province of Nova Scotia, are calling for a full and immediate review of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' process to awarding the Arctic Surf Clam Licence.

After the submission of a 100% Mi'kmaq-owned bid for the licence, with jobs and economic benefits rippling to all Nova Scotians, the Assembly was very disappointed with Minister LeBlanc's decision.

The recent announcement of the successful bid is both misleading and worrisome because the Assembly claims that it does not promote reconciliation and brings the bid process in to question.

"We have serious questions about the integrity and fairness of the process," says Assembly Co-Chair, Chief Terrance Paul. "In coming together as thirteen communities, we know that our proposal was strong, viable and created the greatest impact to 22,000 Mi'kmaq."

The Assembly is calling for the review due to the criteria of the application process not being fulfilled by the successful candidates, Five Nation Clam Co.

In Minister LeBlanc's announcement of the successful applicants, the group was described as an aggregate of multiple communities, including Nova Scotia. In fact, this was not the case at the time of proposal submission or at the time of the announcement by the Minister. The Assembly understands that Nova Scotia Indigenous participation is still lacking from this group as Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities have not signed on to work with Five Nation Clam Co., contrary to the announcement.

The lack of information surrounding why, with fewer economic benefits and uncertainty of Nova Scotia Indigenous participation, the successful candidates were chosen, requires further investigation and calls into question the entire selection process.

The Assembly is standing with other applicants in requesting a full review of the process. The Arctic Surf Clam licence could be an economic game-changer for Indigenous communities – but not if Indigenous groups are simply used in the process. The Surf Clam licence was an opportunity to bring benefits, employment and reconciliation – none of which are being achieved at this time.

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