



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**

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**Division of Marine Fisheries Reopens Wellfleet Harbor to Shellfishing**

**BOSTON** – November 10, 2016 – Effective sunrise on Monday, November 14, 2016, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) will reopen all approved and conditionally approved shellfish areas in the Town of Wellfleet which were closed on October 13, 2016 as a result of a Norovirus outbreak linked to shellfish harvested from the area.

Federal requirements mandate a minimum 21 day closure following a confirmed Norovirus outbreak within shellfish growing areas in order to ensure adequate flushing of both water and shellfish. Based on analysis conducted by DMF and in consultation with the US-Food and Drug Administration (FDA) it was determined that by Monday, November 14, 2016 sufficient flushing will have occurred to ensure that shellfish in the closed areas are safe for harvest and consumption.

DMF conducted a thorough investigation of all impacted shellfish harvest areas, including a complete shoreline survey of Wellfleet Harbor to reevaluate known pollution sources and to identify any new or potential pollution sources, and a complete review of Wellfleet’s marina management and boat live aboard policies. DMF also conducted extensive water quality sampling in Wellfleet Harbor that indicated water quality exceeds minimum standards for shellfishing.

As a result, DMF has concluded that the illness outbreak was likely caused by a discrete temporary introduction of Norovirus into the waters of Wellfleet Harbor, possibly introduced by the overboard discharge of infected waste or bodily fluids. There are no indications of the presence of a reoccurring source of Norovirus, and officials are confident steps have been taken to prevent such an event in the future.

Following the mandated recall of shellfish harvested from Wellfleet waters between September 26, 2016 and October 13, 2016, approximately 165,000 oysters and 50,000 quahogs were returned to aquaculturists for segregation and re-submergence on aquaculture sites in Wellfleet. These shellfish must remain segregated for an additional re-submergence period prior to harvest. Shellfish re-submerged on October 13, 2016 and October 14, 2016 may not be harvested before November 27, 2016. Shellfish re-submerged on October 18, 2016 may not be harvested before December 1, 2016.

Shellfish closure and opening notices can be found on the [DMF website](#).

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