

DIGBY HARBOUR PORT ASSOCIATION

Background:

Transport Canada divested the Digby Wharf to the private sector in 1998.

After 10 years of neglect and disrepair, the Digby Harbour Port Association (DHPA), a not for profit, was established to take over this important asset. This was necessary measure to make the facility available to the fishing sector.

The DHPA has shown excellence in operational stability by focusing wharfage fees into operational cost, but there is no capacity for essential capital improvements. The Port of Digby is not, nor ever was, a DFO Small Craft Harbour.

Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments supported this transition through lump sum infrastructure investments (year span 2009-2011, 2013-2015, 2022-2025). The Port of Digby Master Plan is a phased CAPEX project. Operational funding is the purview of the Digby Harbour Port Association and is fully funded by user fees.

The attached PPT outlines the need for further investments of \$162 M.

Resulting impact for NS and Canada:
Breakdown of landings by sector (2022)

Scallop	\$41 M
Lobster	\$27 M
Salmon	\$43 M
Total	\$111 M

The Port of Digby protects 85 vessels year-round and berthage swells to in excess of 125 vessels during the busiest periods. The estimated value of vessels berthing during peak operations in 2024 was more than \$105 M.

Issue:

The Digby Wharf is a significant piece of economic infrastructure and fabric of Southwest Nova Scotia. The facility is reaching its useful life and thus requires a phased commitment to ensure the operation is available for generations to come. The Port of Digby Master Plan is designed for a multi-use and fully utilized facility. Currently the Port has more demand than space.

The Port of Digby is ideally situated on the Bay of Fundy within the sheltered Annapolis Basin. The Port of Digby is one of the few ports with water at low tide and it has available space to grow within the water lot giving the facility a significant competitive advantage. There is no reasonable alternative for the industries that depend on the facility.

The Sea Level Rise Mitigation study completed in 2024 identified the risk of sea level rise and the increasingly damage due to storms. Additionally, significant deterioration of the oldest wharf components was identified.

The Port has periodically imposed weight restrictions as the support piers were repaired.

Port of Digby Master Plan - description and estimated investment:

This project has been developed in phases for limited disruption of an active facility and for efficiency of project management.

Phase I

Replacement of the existing Marginal Wharf, and new Marginal Wharf infrastructure to the easterly will address some of the oldest part of the wharf and provide a backbone for the future wharf.

Phase II

Dredge spoil to accommodate the new wharf and channel will be deposited in a bermed cell to the northerly creating close to 4 acres of valuable reclaimed land for further sectors.

Phase III

The construction of a new wharf extending into the harbour and the old wharf is demolished and removed thereafter.

Phase IV & Additional

The infill cell has a sheet piling face installed on the easterly and a basin is dredged to allow vessels 10m of water at low tide. This opens the port of Digby up to greater tourism and import/export opportunities.

Reasons to support:

Investment in this critical infrastructure ensures the backbone of the local economy continues to operate without disruption.

The Port of Digby Master Plan additionally positions the facility to expand the services offered to marine clients additional berthage, haul out facilities, and more opportunities to work on their vessels.

Phase IV would position the port with the capability to serve tidal energy and at sea wind farm installations and maintenance, along with potential resource import and export opportunities.

Digby would be positioned to participate in the cruise industry with a quay side berth for vessels.

This project is a strategic investment in infrastructure to enable support to rural industry, resource extraction, and interprovincial and international exports.

The Port of Digby Master Plan is an ideal Federal / Provincial / Community partnership. No one government with total responsibility. This investment would stabilize the current operations and position the port for growth in sectors outside the traditional ones.

Digby Harbour Port Association
CEO, Edwin Chisholm
902 245-1867
Chisholm@PortOfDigby.ca

