

Cliona Ní Cheallacháin



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#### Submission to the Independent Aquaculture Licence Review Group

I welcome the establishment by Minister Michael Creed TD of the independent review group on marine licencing in Ireland.

I am the daughter of a salmon farmer, Damien Ó Ceallacháin. Damien was a pioneer of Irish Aquaculture and set up Muir Gheal Teo, our family run salmon farming business, in the 1980s. I grew up with the aquaculture industry in Ireland, and so I saw first-hand the positive benefits of the industry both in terms of providing much needed employment options in a rural area with few alternatives but also in observing the steadfastness and commitment of the men and women who chose to work in the industry and fight for it. And it was a fight, perhaps understandably as the industry was new and developing at an incredible rate which meant some errors were made resulting in harsh restrictions put in place impulsively.

However, over 30 years later, the lack of progressive change particularly in comparison with other European countries, is not only embarrassing, it is also highly disrespectful of the men and women who have dedicated their lives to a livelihood they believe in, and which has huge potential in terms of employment and improved quality of life in rural areas, but which their government has time and time again neglected.

My current job role involves the communication of marine science for environmental, societal, and economic benefit. I see daily how far the aquaculture industry has progressed, the new knowledge and technology which is available and the need for increased production of safe, high-quality and sustainable food sources, specifically seafood. Ireland has so much potential to respond to these

opportunities and market demand but we are still struggling within the confines of the primitive Irish licensing system. All that is required to enable the industry to sustainably grow, is a system that is user-friendly, practical, transparent to all stakeholders and which puts realistic timescales on all parties.

I fully support the aquaculture industry in Ireland, and will continue to be involved on both a personal and a professional basis, because I believe that we have the knowledge, the products and the people within the aquaculture industry to grow responsibly and become a competitive player in European and Global Aquaculture, with all the benefits to the country this would provide.

I hope that the results of this review will highlight the need for immediate action, and not just continued dialogue, and I look forward to new processes being put in place and the resulting overdue growth in the Irish Seafood industry.

Yours Sincerely,

Cliona Ní Cheallacháin.