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Submission to the Independent Aquaculture Licence Review Group

Firstly, I would like to welcome Minister Creed's intervention in setting up the Independent Review Group on Aquaculture Licencing. Our Company has been involved in the industry since 1988 and as such has seen many challenges over this time. Some of them have been environmental in nature, some have been fluctuations in markets, but one of the biggest has been trying to operate without a licence. We have not been able to access funding, we could not consider expansion and all decisions carried the risk that we were operating outside the law and could bring us into conflict with the authorities at any moment.

Having come through all this uncertainty, I would like to contribute some points which I think are important. I think the Irish coastline and all it's inlets should be considered for aquaculture purposes and developed with a respect for the coastline itself and all other users of this public resource. Priority should be given to young Irish applicants. A maximum size site should be identified for a new applicant and expanded when appropriate. Proper education should be put in place for the certification of young applicants. A 10 year licence should be extended to 20 years and finally big foreign applications should be discouraged. They do nothing for local employment and tend to have multiple sites around Europe where stock is moved on a regular basis, carrying a high risk of disease spreading.

Yours faithfully,

Noel Carter
Director