

Croaghross N.S, Portsalon, Co. Donegal

Dear Chairperson,

The following is my submission to your aquaculture licence review process.

I have held the position of Principal of the above-named school since I moved to the area 20 years ago. We are one of several small schools serving the Fanad Peninsula which has seen the ravages of unemployment and emigration as the policies of successive governments have ignored the steady decline of Rural Ireland. In such an isolated & disadvantaged area, employment opportunities are difficult to create due to poor infrastructure & distance from markets. I fail to understand why a company which has persevered & succeeded despite a continued lack of Government support should be further stymied

Marine Harvest Ireland (MHI), employing 290 people in our area, is the only employer of consequence in the area. Marine Harvest Ireland supports numerous community, sporting and voluntary organisations and we are lucky enough to be one of those which has had funding allocated to it to provide resources for our school which has disadvantaged status. Because of Marine Harvest we have also been able to take part in Junior Achievement Ireland.

However, we are conscious that we can only source highly-valued sponsorship from businesses like Marine Harvest when they are in a position to build a sustainable business in our community. Other local companies, which had supported us, no longer exist due to the economic downturn so we are extremely grateful to MHI for their generous endorsement.

I am aware of the ongoing review and of massive obstacles in the current licencing regime. Why does it take so long to get a licence in Ireland when compared to similar enterprises in Scotland and Norway which have thriving aquaculture industries? Should MHI be awarded further licences, as they have endeavoured to do over many years, employment opportunities would see young people remaining in, & contributing to, the local economy. It would also encourage others to return.

It makes no sense whatsoever that we are restricting a golden opportunity for economic growth because we cannot process applications quickly enough. It's time for the needs of the local community to be considered.

The time for action is now. Any further delay will mean current economic decline will be irreparable. I urge you to approve further licences for MHI &

Sincerely,

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