

From: david dunlop [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 February 2017 21:19
To: aquaculturereview
Subject: Aquaculture Consultation -Donegal

To Whom it May Concern,

I am delighted that the opportunity to appeal against the decision to grant such sweeping licences to aquaculture projects in the Gweedore Bay has been afforded to us. We cannot begin to fathom how so-called experts in this whole area could allow such a massive scheme, with such detrimental potential to the local environment could be allowed to go forward without so much as a proper local consultation and without the findings of a properly conducted Environmental Impact Survey. Incredible!

As a resident in the [REDACTED] area of west Donegal I wish to continue to express my deep concern over what seems to have been a very hasty and ill-informed decision to recommend to the minister responsible that licences be given for large-scale aquaculture on the strand between Carrickfinn/Braade and Ranamona/Ranafast. To me (as someone who has been coming to this Gaeltacht area for nearly forty years and who has moved here permanently five years ago) this seems a remarkably short-sighted decision. It seems to fly straight in the face of the recent news that County Donegal is now THE place to be visiting in Ireland. So many sites have been promoting this fact, mentioning that Carrickfinn airport is one of the world's most beautiful airports to fly into, pushing the new-found popularity of the region's tourist potential. How can we square such tourist promotional agenda with a decision which, no matter how you look at it, will adversely affect the beauty, character and cultural history of one of the county's most naturally beautiful inlets? There is a lack of joined up thinking here.

Yes, we all understand the need for local industry to be encouraged, for local jobs to be created to try to keep our young people in the Gaeltacht region...but not at the cost of our heritage, not to the detriment of our main economic life-blood...the tourist industry. Some years ago a plane paint-spraying plant was proposed beside the existing airport. The case for it was strong, for the same kinds of reasons as I mention, but the plan was rightly rejected because of the plant's potential damage to an area of outstanding natural beauty. If that was true then of a relatively confined hangar, it is all the more true now given the huge scale of the spread of oyster-beds over the very estuary which gives this place it's natural beauty. How did the view come to exist that the area around this site is not densely populated? I find that incredible; yes, if you take Donegal as a whole it might seem that the county is sparsely populated but any drive from Bloody Foreland in the extreme north west, down through Derrybeg, Gweedore, Crolly, Annagry, Ranafast, Mullaghduff, Kincasslagh, Cruit and beyond to Dungloe will surely convince any regional planner that this is a very highly populated stretch of coastline. To me it feels at time like a rural city. It is an area in which local people have an extreme pride in their environment. The sense of history and culture is very pronounced. An example of this is the fact that homes in Ranafast had traditional entitlements for stretches of the sand flats by the shore for the purposes of the fair harvesting of wrack (seaweed) for purposes of fertiliser. Such cultural heritage should not be threatened. Please take account this time of residents' views and revisit the issue with the Minister. Conduct a proper EIS. Meet with the local community and consider the strong case to be heard against this proposal.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,
David A Dunlop