



Deirdre Morgan
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CLONAKILTY
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AQUACULTURE CONSULTATION

Dear Mary, Lorcan, Ken

I would like to congratulate you on your appointments to the review board on aquaculture licensing and I welcome your expertise on progressing a bright future in aquaculture on our western seaboard and in coastal communities.

As an active participant in aquaculture with Clare Island Sea farm from its commencement in 1987, I would like to start by outlining some statistical facts about Clare Island.

- 1985-86, a voluntary group on Clare Island identified necessity for jobs, as there was a critical decline in population. Endemic emigration.
- A decision was made to pursue fin fish farming (salmon).
- BIM involvement to assess site suitability and secure investors.
- Clare Island Sea farms commenced in March 1987. Jobs created on the Island directly = 12
- Population of Clare Island in 1987 was 108-110 people. 11 children in school.
- By mid nineties to early noughties population increased to 165.
- The number of children in school increased to 32-34 an increase of 200%
- Clare Island Sea farm has also contributed funding to various community projects down through the years, the latest being €25,000 towards a second classroom for the island school.
- Clare Island sea farm became the first organic finfish farm in the world in 1991.

These facts are an outline of how this industry can and needs to progress into the near future to create sustainable employment in our coastal communities. It is widely accepted that Clare Island sea farm was the lifeline that saved this community from depletion. An example of this lies with our neighbouring islands where populations are declining rapidly to the point of no winter inhabitants.

While we all welcome the minister's appointment of the review and its objectives, reviews have taken place on a number of occasions over the years with no progress being made in improving the licensing process. As a result, this has left the production of farmed fish on the west coast of Ireland, a long way behind in today's world, and in no way able to meet the demand for our superior fish products.

A wealth of experience and knowledge has accumulated over the last three decades in improving methods of farming making this industry one of the most environmentally friendly, with huge potential for growth of this natural resource. An example here in recent years is the use of fresh water in relation to fish health. However, the big problem here is not being able to secure a foreshore licence to run a basic pipe across an isolated shore to transfer water to fish pens, water that is flowing freely into the sea. It is now imperative that fresh water resources within the areas of finfish farms are allowed to be used as a means of bathing fish when required.

My message is clear, please create an efficient and simple licencing system for aquaculture that is fit for purpose. We are so far only scratching at the surface of a natural resource that has so much to offer. We need to encourage investment, secure and create sustainable jobs, and continue to produce a quality food product that already has worldwide recognition. We can then look back with satisfaction that we have done something that we all can be proud of.

Thank you for taking time to read my submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further explanation on any matters within.

Yours sincerely

Humphrey O Leary

