

Ms. Deirdre Morgan  
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Ref. Submission to the Independent Aquaculture Licence Review Group (IALRG)

A Chara,

My working life has been spent in various forms of aquaculture since I first got an apprenticeship in 1978 at a rainbow trout farm in Borris, County Carlow. I have had the benefit of a third level education in Natural Sciences, Strategic Management, and have worked mainly in salmon culture with Comhlucht Iascaireachta Fanad Teoranta, better known as "Marine Harvest Ireland" where I have been MD since 1997.

My children have attended one of the [REDACTED] which, like those in other coastal communities as remote as on Clare Island, have benefited greatly from local aquaculture development. Your review is about the process of licensing and not the benefits or pros and cons of aquaculture, yet the potential of this livelihood for our coastal communities cannot be over stated. The company that I lead will contribute towards your important review with a very detailed submission, including a legal perspective from its legal advisors, Matheson. I would hereby like to add a comment in a personal capacity:

I have had interactions with Ministers and Civil Servants for over three decades in the various regimes overseeing aquaculture licensing for many years, dating back to the days at Leeson Lane to the current set-up in Clonakilty. Against a background of much criticism towards these administrations, I would like to pay tribute to the individuals who have been, and are, well meaning and hardworking people in these administrations. These employees deserve and need excellence in management and leadership. This is the missing ingredient for their effectiveness and job satisfaction and the collective success of their organisation. This need is demonstrated very clearly by the fact that numerous previous and excellent reviews have led to little or no implementation. Management can only come with training, experience and knowledge, while leadership is more elusive and can only come from key role players prepared to share visions and commit to ambitions for their area of responsibility with colleagues and team-players. A well-functioning organisation ultimately demonstrates leadership at all levels.

Aquaculture is a new and rapidly developing industry with a complexity of attributes such as environmental, animal husbandry and welfare, food science, legal, infrastructure, navigation, safety, planning, and public relations. The regulation and licensing of aquaculture requires a more appropriate organisation. The EPA has been put forward as a good example, typified by a good balance of internal and external expertise, formal relationships with external inputs, division of roles (licensing and enforcement), discipline, goals and targets that bring organisational cohesion, and so on. A properly functioning organisation will manage its own reviews, but now your role is to recommend how this one could be fixed, and in due course the Minister must execute a fix. Sound changes will benefit all involved, not least those in the Department.

Managing organisational change is a speciality task by itself and I would strongly urge you to consider the changes that the Administration has to embrace to become good at what it does with a vision to be amongst the best at serving the industry as well as the general public. Only a well-functioning organisation will be able to implement and make a success of your imminent recommendations.

Thank you for your interest and attention, I wish you every success with shaping a brighter future for sustainable Irish aquaculture, a most valuable and suitable indigenous livelihood for our coastal communities.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Feenstra

[REDACTED] Fanad, County Donegal.