



Ms. Deirdre Morgan
Secretary to the Independent Review Group
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
National Seafood Centre
Clonakilty
Co. Cork
aquaculturereview@agriculture.gov.ie

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Ref. Submission to the Independent Aquaculture License Review Group (IALRG)

Dear members of the Review Group,

As the CEO of Marine Harvest ASA, the parent company of "Comhlucht Iascaireachta Fanad Teoranta", trading as "Marine Harvest Ireland", our company has a direct interest in the sustainable development of the Irish aquaculture sector. Marine Harvest ASA welcomes the independent review group on aquaculture licensing as established by Minister Michael Creed TD. The issue of licensing has been the single most restrictive barrier to the development of the Irish industry and its ability to apply the latest best practices in sustainable environmental and fish health management. Inevitably this has been at the expense of employment and loss to societies in the remote coastal communities in the West of Ireland.

From the outset, MH is very clear that it supports strong regulation and its enforcement, but the regulation needs to keep up to date with the industry; sound regulation is good for the industry and good for its reputation. There have been numerous reviews on how to develop Ireland's Aquaculture Industry in the past. I have personally met with Ministers Smith, Coveney, and Taoiseach Enda Kenny who all assured me of a most positive outlook for salmon aquaculture in Ireland, yet I have learnt of little tangible progress since 20 years. Our Irish Business Unit will contribute to this review with a comprehensive submission which includes a very clear and unambiguous legal view from our Irish solicitors. The legal commentary might lead one to conclude that Irish and EU laws were interpreted to present many and major impediments to the industry's development instead of such laws serving as tools and mechanisms to enable the aquaculture industry to develop in harmony with other interests. Ultimately this reflects on the need for a much more positive mind-set and conviction (by the licensing authority) as to the benefits that aquaculture offers remote coastal communities in the West of Ireland. Either the regulator needs to be brave, or there is a need for a much deeper understanding of the industry and its needs and limitations.

The single point I would hereby like to submit to you, is for you to consider and define what changes are needed within the Dept. of Agriculture Food and the Marine so that the outcome of your review will indeed be implemented. Nothing will change unless changes are made, and I wish you every success with the task of delivering this highly anticipated review. It is very clear that our current and future employees are depending on it.

Yours sincerely,
Alf-Helge Aarskog

CEO