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From: ' martin mcbride [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 February 2017 09:47
To: aquaculturereview
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Independent Review of Aquaculture Licencing Process

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Licence Review Committee Members

My name is Martin McBride. I am from Donegal but live in [REDACTED] Co Mayo. I currently work as a Diver and I have been subcontracted in to Marine Harvest Ireland for the past 10 years at the Clare Island fish farm site. I have a young family in Donegal and would like to move back home to Donegal however, due to the delay in issuing new licences in Donegal there are currently no diving positions available near home.

Marine Harvest Ireland has operations all down the west coast of Ireland from Donegal to Cork.

I am from a coastal community in Kerrykeel, Co Donegal and salmon farming has supported our area for the past four decades which has been a life line to our local community and economy. Aquaculture has enabled me to stay in Ireland, when other families have had to move away in search of work. It provides valued employment within the area.

Service industries surrounding aquaculture also benefit hotels, shops, garages, transport, community centres as well as local sporting clubs.

I am delighted that you are in the process of reviewing the current aquaculture licencing system because in my opinion the system is not working at all. When Marine Harvest Ireland applies for a licence, we have no idea when the application might be processed. The company applied for a licence in 2011 at a site in Bantry bay and there is still no decision. Donegal desperately needs new sites and this needs to be addressed as soon as possible to try to keep families in the area.

I implore your committee to examine and resolve the issues which have held the industry back for over 20 years. If more resources are required, can you please recommend that these resources be found urgently? If the industry is allowed to flourish, the return to the exchequer would be such that the state will achieve a significant return from any such redeployment of resources.

There is scope in this country to have a thriving aquaculture sector with the direct and indirect economic benefits which this can create. It stands to reason that an island nation on the outermost fringes of Europe has scope to grow its blue economy, specifically consent to more salmon farms albeit in an environmentally responsible manner. We hope this review will allow Ireland to have a fair opportunity to grow its aquaculture industry in line with European best practice.

This review should result in a licence which is fit for purpose and allows the company to grow and harvest fish in a manner which our colleagues in other countries do. I know that if we had more licences, my colleagues and I would have more work which is what we want.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my submission and look forward to a positive outcome from this review.

Yours sincerely

Martin McBride