



8th February 2017

Re : Independent Review of Aquaculture Licencing Process

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make the following submission regarding this Review. My name is Maurice Connolly. I work as Freshwater Site Manager at the Marine Harvest Ireland Pettigo Salmon Hatchery. I have worked at this salmon hatchery for the past 29 years.

The Pettigo hatchery employs 6 staff, 5 full-time and one part-time. It's a small number of employees but, in a sparsely populated area like Pettigo, it is a significant employer. Pettigo hatchery has provided stable employment for myself and my colleagues for the past 29 years. We do business with the other businesses in the area and contribute to local voluntary organizations in our community.

Our last Fish Culture Licence at Pettigo from the Department of Marine was granted on 25th October 1996, so our licence expired in 2006. In January 2005, we made a submission to the Department looking for a review of our Licence. To date no decision has been made regarding our Licence and no new Licence has been issued. There have been huge advances in the culture of salmon and the treatment of effluent in the past 20 years but we are straitjacketed with a licence issued in 1996.

We often have auditors from abroad inspecting our farm and they cannot believe that our Licence expired in 2006 and has never been renewed. As an Irishman I am embarrassed that our government has been unable to provide a functioning regulatory framework for salmon farming. At this stage many licences have not been renewed and new licences are as rare as hen's teeth.

Since I started salmon farming in 1988, there has been a decline in farmed salmon production in Ireland. At the same time the business has grown exponentially in other countries. For example, farmed salmon was the largest food export in Scotland in 2014 with an estimated value of about £520 million at farm gate prices. The main reason why salmon farming has declined in Ireland in the past 20 years is due to problems with the licencing system

I wish your Committee success and hopefully this issue can solved

Yours sincerely,

M Connolly

Maurice Connolly, M.Sc