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Dear chairperson,

As a business dedicated to sourcing and processing Irish seafood where possible I feel compelled to write to you regarding your review of the current aquaculture licensing situation in Ireland.

We are faced with a very real problem in terms of our product offering. A significant percentage of our customers who wish to buy Irish salmon cannot do so. This is because we cannot source enough of the product from our Irish suppliers due to the restrictions of the current licence process. Our point of differentiation as a business is based on our ability to offer a product produced in Ireland, with Irish provenance. We are currently unable to do this and are forced to rely on imports.

It is quite shocking that an island nation such as ours would have to import salmon from other countries and continents with the loss to the Irish economy and the ability of my business and that of the Aquaculture sector to provide local jobs for local people. There is obviously a major obstacle to farming and growing our own Irish salmon. Are we unable to issue licences, if so, why?

Our business has a current turnover in excess of €30m and provides employment for 100 people. We are in the unfortunate position where we have to refuse business as we do not have access to Irish raw material which our customers require.

Our business and our industry is missing out on a significant opportunity to develop a niche market for a highly sought after Irish product.

I would therefore implore your committee to examine and resolve whatever logjam has developed in the Irish aquaculture regulatory system.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Ecock", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Ken Ecock

Commercial Director.