

From: Mike Sammon [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 February 2017 15:42
To: aquaculturereview
Subject: Independent Review of Aquaculture Licencing Process

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Dear Chairpersons,

I wish you the best of luck with this worthy and crucial endeavour. I would like to submit some of my experienced views and opinions on the state of aquaculture licensing and thank you for taking the time to read these.

My name is Michael Sammon. I live in West Cork with my wife and two young daughters. We live in a very scenic but also commercial area, beside the sea, where the marine environment provides jobs, full and part time, through tourism, fishing, aquaculture, transportation and general leisure. Both my wife and myself have worked all our careers in industries related to the marine, ranging from environmental monitoring to Organic Salmon Farming. Specifically I have been working in the aquaculture industry, from management to research, for over thirty five years. I currently travel the country working and consulting on specific projects and events with aquaculture farms from salmon to mussels. Having been born on the west coast of Ireland, respecting and making a living from the sea was one and the same thing. I would like to think this experience would give me a say in the future of our waters. My opinions are from an experienced practical point of view based on what I see every day of the week and my earnest desire and aim is to improve the state of our industries while maintaining of natural and future marine resources.

For too long this huge potential industry has been ignored through paltry ineffective assistance and unsound or non-existent long term planning and investment. There has been a distinct lack of joint up thinking between rapidly changing biological and economical environments and traditional and potentially outdated departmental approaches to evolving issues. Every farmer, land and sea, knows they must adapt to the current situations they face yet we are tied down in a slow moving outdated governmental structures which show no such adaptability let alone flexibility. The time has long since been here that the department responsible for the marine takes action in this area.

We only have to look at Norway and Scotland to see how far they have progressed and the amount of money it provides to their economy. I have worked with and visited these farms and can see no practical reason we cannot adopt their best practices, protect our natural marine resources and improve our economy at the same time. It should be noted that my concerns and interests are not only for successful sustainable industries but also for the improvement and quality of sustainable rural jobs. Now is a great time to do this due to the high demand for our superior organic salmon for example. But we must immediately develop a culture of faster informed adaptation and delivery.

This is a great opportunity for you to put rural Ireland on the map by allowing more suitable sustainable well monitored licenses to be issued and to reduce the time it takes to get them. Balancing all needs fairly. This is currently the most urgent bottleneck in the aquaculture sector. At a minimum the licence application process needs to be sped up dramatically. This process is currently unfit for purpose. If you have concerns then have it monitored properly. Allow for money made from such farms to go directly to local development such as piers/roads/schools/amenity areas and possible scholarships for our students potentially as part of the licence process. Think boldly and use innovative measures. We face tough economic and commercial competition, climate change, fragile marine ecosystems and uncertain global stability. We need hope. I hope that you will be the people that made a difference and are not afraid of change. I am happy to discuss any issues you may have.

Best regards,

Michael Sammon