Alab, Info

From: Angela O'Donovan [redacted]
Sent: Friday 16 October 2026 23:38
To: Alab, Info
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Dear Minister

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the industrial-scale shellfish aquaculture development licensed in Ballyness Bay, County Donegal, and to ask you to support the protection of this unique and treasured natural environment.
I grew up in the local community and my parents still live there. I live near London now and really enjoy my visits home . One of my favourite memories is visiting the serene beauty of the local beaches. I have been privileged to have travelled the world and enjoyed many different beaches globally in Australia, USA, Canada, Europe, India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia yet the beaches surrounding Falcarragh and especially Ballyness Bay stand out for its natural beauty, natural ecosystem and is essential to the local community.
I have seen first hand the negative environmental and visual impact of fish farming in nearby Prucklish, a short walk from where I grew up. I have worked for 35 years in the food safety and sustainability sector, I understand the importance of conservation yet also the economic benefits this project potentially offers. It is very obvious these are far outweighed by the negative effects to the vast majority of all the local communities now and their future generations .

Ballyness Bay is far more than a potential site for commercial production. It is an important part of the natural heritage of west Donegal, a place of outstanding coastal beauty, a habitat for wildlife and a valuable resource for the local community. Its protected status reflects the importance of safeguarding its sensitive coastal habitats for future generations.

I recognise that aquaculture can contribute to employment and economic activity. However, economic development must be appropriate to its location, proportionate in scale and compatible with the long-term protection of the environment. The question

is not whether shellfish farming can have economic benefits, but whether this particular development, in this particular location and at this scale, is in the best interests of the bay and the wider community.

I am deeply concerned about the potential cumulative effects of multiple aquaculture sites on the bay's intertidal habitats, wildlife, landscape and recreational use. The physical presence of cultivation bags, trestles, nets and associated equipment, together with harvesting operations and vehicle movements, raises legitimate questions about habitat disturbance, visual intrusion and the future character of this coastline.

There are also important economic considerations. The natural beauty of Ballyness Bay is an asset that supports tourism, walking, angling and other recreational activities. Local businesses and livelihoods benefit from visitors who come to experience the unspoilt character of Donegal's coastline. Any assessment of the proposed development must consider these existing and future benefits alongside the anticipated economic gains from aquaculture. We must not risk undermining one part of the local economy without a transparent and credible assessment of the consequences for the whole community.

I am also concerned that the environmental assessment process must fully address the specific characteristics of this protected site, including sensitive habitats, wildlife disturbance, access routes, harvesting methods and the combined effects of multiple licensed operations. Where uncertainty remains about potential damage to protected features, a precautionary and evidence-based approach is essential.

The community's concerns deserve to be taken seriously. Decisions affecting a shared natural resource should be informed by transparent evidence, meaningful public participation and a full appreciation of local knowledge and experience. Residents should have confidence that their concerns have been properly considered and that environmental protection has not been treated as secondary to commercial interests.

I therefore respectfully ask you to:

1. Support the protection of Ballyness Bay from industrial-scale aquaculture that could compromise its conservation value and natural character.
2. Ensure that the environmental implications of the licensed operations, including their cumulative effects, are rigorously and transparently assessed.
3. Support full compliance with all applicable national and European environmental and conservation requirements.
4. Ensure that the community's concerns about tourism, recreation, wildlife and local livelihoods are properly considered in decisions affecting the bay.
5. Oppose any further expansion of aquaculture in Ballyness Bay unless its compatibility with the site's conservation objectives can be clearly and lawfully demonstrated.

6. Support a long-term approach that protects the bay's natural heritage while encouraging sustainable, community-benefiting economic opportunities for west Donegal.

Once sensitive coastal habitats and the natural character of a place are damaged, restoration may be difficult or impossible. The decisions made today will shape the future of Ballyness Bay for generations. We should not sacrifice this irreplaceable natural asset without compelling evidence that the development is appropriate, its impacts are acceptable and the public interest is properly protected.

I urge you to listen to the community, scrutinise the evidence and stand up for the long-term protection of Ballyness Bay. Protecting this bay is not opposition to responsible enterprise; it is a commitment to ensuring that economic activity does not come at an unacceptable cost to our environment, our local identity and the opportunities available to future generations.

I would appreciate a written response outlining your position on this matter and the actions you are prepared to take to support the protection of the bay.

Regards
Angela O'Donovan
