The Secretary,
Aquaculture Licence Appeals Board,
Kilminchy Court,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.
R32 DTW5

Date: 27 October 2026

Re: Determination of Appeal (Ref. AP2-AP11/2025) against decisions by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to grant Aquaculture Licences to Joseph Coll, Edward & Paul O'Brien and Anthony McCafferty for the cultivation of pacific oysters and clams at Ballyness Bay, Co. Donegal.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing this submission in support of the upholding of the decision by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to grant Aquacultural Licences to Joseph Coll, Hillcrest, Meenlaragh, Gortahork, Co. Donegal, Edward & Paul O'Brien, Magheraroarty, Gortahork, Co. Donegal and Anthony McCafferty, Glasserchoo, Gortahork, Co. Donegal for the cultivation of pacific oysters and claims on the intertidal foreshore at Ballyness Bay, Co. Donegal. I support this decision because of the opportunities the granting of licences can provide for local employment and the contribution they can make to ensuring sustainable employment opportunities in the rural Gaeltacht areas of Donegal.

I believe that this decision will support the sustainable development of the local aquaculture sector, provide opportunities for local employment and contribute to the economic vitality of the surrounding rural Gaeltacht community. In my view, supporting sustainable aquaculture can help sustain local livelihoods, address rural decline and contribute to the growth of Ireland's blue economy.

The 2022 Pobal HP Deprivation Index identifies Gortahork Electoral Division as 'Disadvantaged'[1]. Male unemployment in the area of which the licences relate to stands at 27.8%, compared with the Donegal average of 11.2%, while female unemployment stands at 11%, compared with 9.3% across the county. The proportion with third-level education is approximately 27%, below the county figure of 33.8%. These figures highlight the need for accessible local employment opportunities that provide people with the chance to earn a living and remain in their own community.

Having spent time in the area both as a student of the Irish language and on personal visits, I have always loved Ballyness Bay. On the occasions when I saw people working on the beach, I enjoyed seeing this activity. I do not feel that the oyster trestles or the work taking place detract from my enjoyment of the bay. To me, they bring life to the area. I believe there is room for people to earn a living from the bay while others continue to enjoy visiting it, as has historically taken place in Ireland.

Given the unemployment levels in the locality, I believe these opportunities for local people to earn a living are important. They can help people remain in this Gaeltacht community and support its future. From my own visits, I have enjoyed seeing people working on the beach and feel that this activity adds to the character of Ballyness Bay. For these reasons, I ask that the Minister's decision to grant the licences be upheld.

Kind regards,

Bláthnaid Farrell Ryan

[redacted]