Alab, Info

From: Danielle Marie O'Neill [redacted]
Sent: Monday 2 November 2026 12:50
To: Alab, Info
Subject: Ballyness Bay

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Dear Secretary,

Re: Remitted appeals AP2/2025 to AP11/2025 (sites T12/407B, T12/409A, T12/409B, T12/441A, T12/441B, T12/441C, T12/500A, T12/502A, T12/515A and T12/516A)

I am writing to object to the proposed oyster and clam farming licences in Ballyness Bay and to ask the Board to refuse all of them.

My husband and I lived in Ballyness for several years, and the bay is a place we know and have a real connection with. It is a beautiful and much-loved part of Donegal, enjoyed by local people and visitors for swimming, kayaking, surfing, windsurfing and simply spending time by the water. I find it difficult to accept that such a significant change to the bay could be allowed without much greater consideration of what it would mean for the people who use and value it.

One of the things that makes Ballyness Bay so special is its wildlife. We have been fortunate to see seals resting on the sand just off the pier, a wonderful sight that reminds you how important the bay is as a natural habitat, not just a place for human recreation. The bay supports a variety of wildlife, and I worry about the effect that introducing extensive shellfish farming, with its structures and ongoing activity, could have on the natural environment and the animals that depend on it. These are things that make Ballyness unique and should be protected for future generations.

I am particularly concerned about safety. The proposed steel trestles will be submerged or partly submerged at higher tides. Although the applicants acknowledge that the sites would need to be marked, no actual marking plan has been provided. The bay is used for water activities, and I do not believe the potential danger to swimmers and other water users has been properly considered.

I am also worried about the Pacific oysters themselves. The applicants' own environmental report admits that the risk of these oysters becoming established naturally in Ballyness Bay cannot be discounted. The oysters proposed are described as only partially sterile. We already know that escaped Pacific oysters have established wild populations in Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle. Why should we take that risk with Ballyness Bay?

The appearance of the bay is another concern. At low tide, the applicants acknowledge that the trestles will be visible across the open, flat landscape. Yet no proper visual assessment or photomontages have been provided to show people what the bay would actually look like if these developments went ahead.

I also note that ALAB's updated screening in August 2026 found that significant effects on fourteen protected sites could not be ruled out. That is a serious concern and should not be treated lightly.

Ballyness Bay is a natural asset that belongs to the whole community. Its value cannot be measured simply in tonnes of shellfish or projected employment. I do not believe the potential benefits justify putting its natural character, wildlife, safety and future enjoyment at risk.

I respectfully ask the Board to refuse all of the aquacultire licences covered by these appeals and to put the long-term protection of Ballyness Bay first.

Please confirm receipt of this submission and that it has been placed on each of the ten appeal files.

Yours sincerely,

Danielle Ferry

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