Fergal McGorman
[redacted]

Date: _____

To:
Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Re: Objection to Proposed Oyster Farming Licences in Ballyness Bay, Co. Donegal

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to formally object to the granting of oyster farming licences within Ballyness Bay, County Donegal.

My objection is based on concerns regarding the impact that the introduction of oyster farming may have on sea trout habitat, recreational angling, public amenity, navigation, and the overall natural character of the bay.

I am a regular sea trout angler and have a strong interest in the protection and preservation of Ballyness Bay as an important coastal environment. The bay and surrounding waters provide valuable habitat and feeding areas for sea trout and support a recreational fishery enjoyed by local anglers and visitors alike. Ballyness Bay is an important natural asset that should be protected and managed for the benefit of all users.

I am concerned that the installation of oyster farming infrastructure, including trestles, bags, marker buoys and associated equipment, will alter the character of the bay and reduce the amount of open water available for recreational use. Ballyness Bay is used by anglers, walkers, small boat users and visitors who value its natural and relatively unspoilt appearance. Introducing commercial aquaculture into the bay has the potential to conflict with these existing uses and diminish the area's amenity value.

Sea trout depend on healthy coastal habitats during their marine phase. While the precise effects of oyster farming on sea trout behaviour and habitat may be difficult to quantify, I believe a precautionary approach should be adopted where uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts on fish habitat, feeding areas and migratory routes. The importance of Ballyness Bay as a coastal environment for sea trout should be fully considered before any licences are granted.

I am also concerned about the visual impact of oyster farming infrastructure. Ballyness Bay is widely appreciated for its scenic beauty and natural character. The introduction of extensive

aquaculture structures would substantially alter the appearance of the bay and could detract from the qualities that make the area attractive to both local residents and visitors.

A further concern relates to the long-term management of aquaculture equipment and associated waste. In other coastal locations where oyster farming takes place, it is not uncommon to encounter discarded plastic oyster bags, rubber fastenings, damaged markers, broken equipment and old trestles left within the marine or shoreline environment. Such materials can become unsightly, contribute to marine litter and detract from the natural appearance of coastal areas. I am concerned that similar issues could arise within Ballyness Bay if oyster farming is introduced. This marine litter is tolerated by the licence approvers for current sites all around Ireland so there is no doubt that we would face the same mess at Ballyness if its approved.

The proposed development may also create obstacles for users of small boats and kayaks and reduce access to areas traditionally used for angling and recreation. Any decision on licensing should carefully consider the rights and interests of existing users of the bay.

Ballyness Bay is an important recreational and environmental resource. In my view, the introduction of oyster farming would represent a significant change to the character of the area and carries risks to the amenity, appearance and traditional use of the bay. For these reasons, I respectfully request that the proposed oyster farming licences be refused.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Fergal McGorman

Fergal McGorman

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