Alab, Info

From: helen connaghan [redacted]
Sent: Friday 30 October 2026 21:41
To: Alab, Info
Subject: Ballyness Bay Donegal licence objection

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Dear Sir/Madam,
I am writing to express my strong objection to the granting of aquaculture licences in Ballyness Bay area Donegal.
You have the power to do such an enormous amount of good by refusing these licences.
The communities around Ballyness Bay do not have an abundance of amenities. What they do have, is something incredibly precious, a beautiful, peaceful, natural coastline.
For so many people, this coastline is much more than a scenic view. It is where they go to walk, to de-stress, to clear their minds, to walk their dogs, to enjoy the peace and quiet.
I regularly see two Ukrainian women walking to the beach to paddle in the water. I think about what this simple, peaceful activity must mean to them that have experienced such upheaval in their lives. These natural spaces can provide such comfort and healing.
I see the learning that takes place on a beach, for children it is wonderful. Showing a child where to find a crab at low tide, discovering hermit crabs, periwinkles, sea anemones, shrimp, tiny snails, barnacles and small fish in seawater pools. Teaching them to respect living creatures, their habitat and to return them carefully to where they belong.
Then watching those same children proudly teach their cousins what they have learned. This is how a love of nature begins and how respect for our environment is passed from one generation to the next. How can we expect future generations to care for nature if we continue to compromise the very places where they learn to love it?
I struggle to make any sense of permitting the commercial cultivation of non-native oysters within a Special Area of Conservation.
The Government of Ireland recognised this area as being so environmentally important that it warrants special conservation status. Yet that same government may permit a commercial aquaculture licence involving a non-native species within that same protected environment. How does this make sense?
There is also the following points:
-The accumulation of oxygen-depleted sediment beneath oyster-growing operations, preventing marine life below.
-The risks that aquaculture equipment /structures pose to seals and other wildlife using the bay.
-The non-native oysters being able to reproduce, and damage the natural ecosystem.
-The visual impact of commercial oyster-growing structures on a beautiful, natural landscape.
-The probability of discarded aquaculture-related waste accumulating along the shoreline.
-The impact on tourism, in an area so dependent on its natural scenery, wildlife, birdwatching and unspoilt coastline to attract visitors and support local employment.
-The additional tractors and trailers using narrow roads that were never designed for substantial commercial traffic.

-The loss of safety for those who walk these roads for exercise, recreation and wellbeing.
-The potential noise and disturbance for nearby homes and communities, at all hours.
I understand that working within a government agency involves legislation, procedures, assessments and I appreciate that decisions may not be as straightforward as they appear from the outside.
But I also believe that there are moments when the people making these decisions have a genuine opportunity to make a lasting difference. This is one of those moments.
To make such an important decision about its future please come see what is at stake. Walk the beaches, experience the peace, see the wildlife and understand why this place matters so deeply to so many people. You would be very welcome.
Then ask yourselves whether this is really an appropriate place for commercial oyster cultivation.
Please do not allow the process to become more important than what it is supposed to protect.
Behind every application number is a real place that cannot simply be recreated somewhere else if you get this wrong.
The consequences of this decision will not remain on paper.
They will be seen in the bay, heard along the shoreline, felt by the communities and suffered by the wildlife that has no voice in this process.
Years from now, when the people who made this decision have moved on to other jobs or retired, Ballyness Bay will still be here. Our children and grandchildren will inherit whatever is left of it.
Please refuse these licences.
Please protect Ballyness Bay.
Yours sincerely,
Helen Connaghan