Dear Mr Brogan,

I strongly object to the total disregard shown by the Dept of Agriculture (DAFM) and the Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board (ALAB) for the opinions of the vast majority of the community in their total opposition to shellfish farming in Ballyness Bay. Rather, there seems to have been noticeable bias by them in favour of the oyster licence applicants all during the licensing and appeals process.

I object to ALAB's disregard of the wellfounded concerns that have been expressed for the natural environment in the bay, coupled with their ignoring of the most basic of the EU Directives to protect its rare and endangered wildlife.

A particularly dangerous threat is the introduction of non-native species of Clams and Pacific Oysters into the Bay and the denial of the well documented possibility of these to revert to spawning and colonise the surrounding area.

Ballyness Bay is a much cherished amenity in the community. It provides a health-giving location for walking, swimming, boating, angling, art, windsurfing etc, to the community and to visitors alike.

Shellfish farming will add pollution, litter, noise and daily and nighttime disturbance.

Ballyness Bay is an increasingly popular beauty spot along the Wild Atlantic Way. That translates into tourism income that is a particularly important addition to the local economy. Arrays of oyster trestles would be an unacceptable visual blot on the bay as well as reducing its appeal to visitors and locals alike.

Wide experience from other areas all point to a marked deterioration in the local environment once commercial shellfish farming is introduced. We do not want Ballyness Bay to follow the same pattern.

This is a hugely important issue for our community.

For all these reasons outlined and many more, we strongly object to the granting of aquaculture licences in Ballyness Bay.

Kindest regards

Maria Castano

MARIA CASTANO

[redacted]

