



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

George Eustice MP  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

Our ref: AR/CA/2013

03 July 2014

Dear George,

It is clear to all of us that marine related issues have recently risen significantly up both the political and public agenda.

This Government's success in pushing through the new Common Fisheries Policy, has been a triumph for those of us who supported the robust approach of your predecessor.

As you are of course aware, the need now is for an implementation process that adequately reflects and builds on this. On that basis we write to offer support for the decisions you will be taking in this regard.

As Members with coastal constituencies, one thing that strikes us time and again are the empty harbours and bare beaches that were once thronged with fishing boats of all sizes. We all recognise that technological improvements have continued to assist our fishermen to become more efficient. Arguably, too efficient. We are still paying the price of past overfishing and this is reflected in the demise of so many otherwise viable smaller scale fishing businesses around our coasts.

This reduction in fishing opportunities has not been the fault of the smaller scale operators that once formed the backbone of so many coastal communities, yet they have paid a massive price.

There is a once in a lifetime opportunity to redress these past inequalities through effective implementation of the Regulations.

For example, meeting the requirements of Article 17 of the new CFP and allocating quota, not on the basis of a set of somewhat dubious historical track records but on the far more sensible and fair use of environmental, social and economic criteria. If you were able to link the requirement under Article 17 with an Action Plan for small scale fisheries required under Article 18 of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund then we would meet the statement in Defra's 2027 Vision of the need to support this vital element of coastal Britain.



Whilst such an approach would not differentiate on the basis of vessel size, it would rightly tend to favour the smaller class of vessel that largely meet these criteria. By using this approach for allocation of resources, you could reinvigorate our coastal communities, create a significant number of jobs in areas of special need and kick start a renaissance in the provision of fresh, locally caught fish from a larger number of smaller vessels. This initiative would support and encourage more new, young fishermen, as well as feeding the growing popularity of community supported fisheries, such as the Defra sponsored Catchbox scheme, that have proven so successful in reconnecting concerned consumers with smaller scale local fishers.

With food security and climate change becoming ever more important, it will be vital to support industry resilience and new jobs in a sustainable fishing sector with reduced greenhouse gas emissions. As it stands, the under ten quota pool has neither the size nor flexibility necessary to ensure that this most sustainable sector of the fleet will be able to continue fishing when the landing obligations comes into force.

We know that such a positive approach will be welcomed by the vast majority of fishers and wider public as signs of our commitment to sustainable growth in coastal areas that were once thriving centres of such activities. We look forward to working together with you to make these ideas a reality for the benefit of all our constituents.

Yours sincerely,

Amber Rudd  
MP for Hastings and Rye

Laura Sandys  
MP for South Thanet

Peter Aldous  
MP for Waveney