



To: Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Re: Joint statement in relation to the High Court Judicial Review on restrictions on trawling activity inside the 6nm limit

29 October 2020

Dear Minister McConalogue,

Responding to news that Ireland's High Court has found that the ban on vessels larger than 18m from operating within the country's six nautical mile inshore waters was void and of no legal effect, our organisations representing the interests of a healthy marine environment and a sustainable inshore fishing sector call on you to take the necessary steps to reinstate the ban.

The policy directive introduced in 2018 was one of the most important fisheries policy shifts in the history of the state and was broadly welcomed as being the right decision from a social, economic, environmental and social justice perspective. According to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the majority of the over 900 stakeholder submissions made in response to the Minister's review of fishing access inside the 6 nautical mile zone (6nm zone) supported restrictions on large trawlers based on environmental, economic and gear conflict issues.

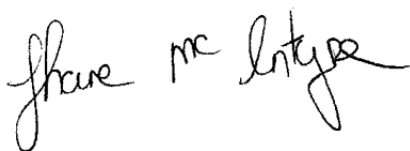
The rationale behind the ban was supported by expert analysis by the Marine Institute and the Bord Iascaigh Mhara. These reports highlighted that restricting the access of larger vessels inside the 6nm zone would lead to improved protection of coastal environments and essential fish habitat, benefitting marine biodiversity and commercially exploited fish stocks. They highlighted the socio-economic benefits for the smaller inshore vessels, that constitute the vast majority of Ireland's registered fishing vessels. The potential benefits included diversification opportunities, more jobs, and added value of landings. Improved management of inshore waters could be achieved by aligning fishing more closely with local ecological and environmental objectives and by reducing conflict between mobile and static gears. For coastal communities and consumers benefits could include a strengthening of the link between local fish resources and local economies with spin-off benefits for the sustainability of supply chains and local businesses.

All these potential benefits remain within reach. It is deeply disappointing and extremely worrying to us that the new dawn in the management of our inshore environment is under threat from what

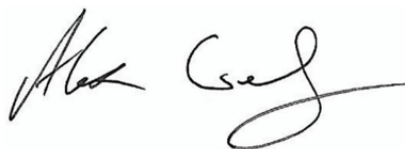
appears to be a technicality. The Policy Directive created a huge opportunity for the inshore sector and if that opportunity is to be denied, then the sector in its current form faces a very uncertain future and possibly a complete collapse.

We call on you to take decisive action to prioritise sustainable fisheries management in Ireland's inshore waters in the interest of the vast majority of Irish fishers, coastal communities and marine wildlife, instead of the demands of a privileged minority.

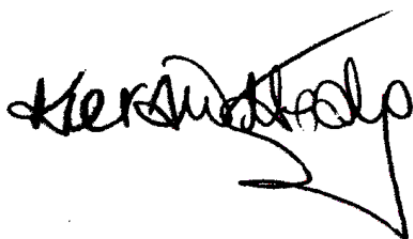
Yours sincerely,



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Director
National Inshore Fisheries Organisation



Alex Crowley
General Secretary
National Inshore Fisheries Organisation



Kieran Healy
Director
National Inshore Fisheries Association



Alex Crowley
General Secretary
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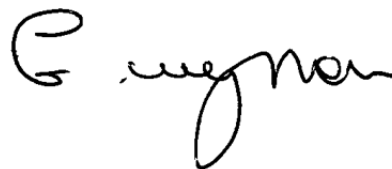
Gary Freemantle
Interim CEO
An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland



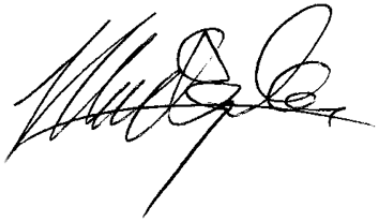
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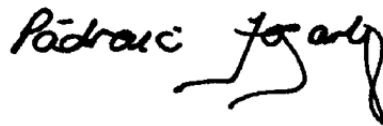
Tony Lowes
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