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Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture

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Isle of Man king scallops - daily catch restriction

I write with regards to the recent change to management measures for the king scallop fishery within the Isle of Man territorial sea, a change that reduced the daily catch quota for vessels from 1050 kilograms to 700 kilograms.

To date, there has been no direct communication from DEFA to Marine Scotland in relation to the new restriction now in operation. In a shared fishery of this nature such an approach is unacceptable.

I understand that Marine Scotland first received notification of the change from Scottish fishermen active in the fishery. These fishermen were themselves alerted to the new measure by text message on Friday 24 November 2017 at five pm.

As you will be aware, the 2012 Fisheries Management Agreement (FMA) between Fisheries Administrations of the UK and the Isle of Man, sets out the process for putting in place management measures within the Isle of Man territorial sea. Section 9 of the FMA deals with consultation on fisheries measures and is particularly relevant in this case.

I would like to understand:

- why the process set out in the FMA, a process designed to ensure all parties are properly consulted, has not been followed?
- the 'serious and unforeseen' threat that necessitated the introduction of a 700 kilogram daily limit and
- what consideration has been taken of the range of vessels involved in the fishery.

The Scottish Government previously highlighted concern at the impact of a daily catch limit that restricted vessels to 1050 kilograms both on vessels and associated businesses. We strongly advocated a weekly allowance that would have taken greater consideration of all



those with an interest in the fishery. A daily catch limit has a disproportionate impact on the larger class of vessels in the Scottish fleet, and it appears there has been inadequate consideration of the wide range of vessels involved in the fishery.

Allan Gibb's letter of 26 October 2017 also highlighted our concerns regarding Scottish industry representation on the Scallop Management Board, noting that invited members from Scotland do not reflect the views of the Scottish industry nor Scottish Government. We have previously stressed the importance of consultation with us ahead of progressing with management measures, something which has been ignored.

I acknowledge your right to lead management of fisheries in the Isle of Man territorial sea, but the collective approach embedded in the FMA must be at the forefront of decisions taken.

I look forward to hearing from you and receiving assurance that we will be properly consulted in the future.

Yours sincerely
Fergus

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