

Noeleen Roche

From: Feenstra, Jan C <Jan.Feenstra@marineharvest.com>
Sent: 13 January 2017 14:32
To: Noeleen Roche
Subject: FW: Submission to proposed dumping at sea in Donegal Bay
Attachments: EPA170113.pdf

From: Feenstra, Jan C
Sent: 13 January 2017 14:30
To: 'oeleen Roche'
Cc: richieflynn@ifa.ie; McManus, Catherine; Brennan, David; Connors, Pat; 'Gibbons, Joseph (Joseph.Gibbons@marineharvest.com)'
Subject: Submission to proposed dumping at sea in Donegal Bay

Dear Noeleen,

Please find attached our company's submission per the EPA's invitation and advertisement in the Donegal Democrat, 15th of December 2016.

We would appreciate your confirmation of receipt.

Thank you and kind regards,

Jan

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06.01.2017

RINMORE

Ref: Application by Dept. of Agriculture to dump spoils from dredging to build proposed Pier Extension at Smooth Point, Killybegs, County Donegal.

Dear Sir / Madam,

Reference is made to the "public notice dumping at sea acts 1996 to 2010" in the Donegal Democrat dated 15th of December, 2016, and the information provided on your website www.epa.ie.

1. We would be gravely concerned by the conclusion in the documentation that the proposed location for the dumping of spoils should be at location A. This location was used before in 2002, and it is unclear as to whether this was the root cause to the wiping out of the then three salmon companies in Donegal Bay. In this context, the Dept. has submitted its report on this titled "Summary of Salmon Mortalities Investigation". This incident and its investigation are worthy of note:

- The report is inconclusive, not surprisingly because the salmon mortality was due to "gill damage", the cause of which is very difficult to establish at the best of times. Such a diagnosis can typically only be concluded after the incident by a water borne irritant that is hard to identify or is no longer there.
- The losses were very substantial to the value of tens of millions of Euro, hence there will always be a question-mark over the objectivity of a report published by an institute subservient to the defensive party that was potentially going to be sued by rights of subrogation on behalf of the stock insurers of the farming companies.
- The anecdotal evidence from people observing the water quality at the time of this disaster clearly identified some kind of anoxic turnover of the seabed. This had never been observed before and has not been observed since. It is therefore unacceptable to dismiss the possibility of the spoil at the dumping site having been a factor to this disastrous situation.

We submit that in the absence of the exhaustive investigations not having established the cause to the mortalities, a precautionary approach should apply and rule out the option of using site "A" again.

2. When the salmon industry applies for a new or renewal of a license to farm fish at a marine location, it has to provide an EIS that is expected to be more detailed and factual than what has been provided for this proposal to dump dredging spoils at sea. It is our view that what is clearly missing from the studies and information provided are:
 - Computer dispersal studies from leading International engineering consultancies. Such studies have become a standard element of any finfish application. It is too simplistic to note that the prevailing currents are Northerly as this does not take account of tidal streams and surface currents and disturbance caused by wind.

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- The accompanying EIS acknowledges that the proposed dredge disposal works could potentially cause plumes of suspended solids and a reduction in water quality with a resultant impact on aquatic life. However, the EIS does not consider the fate of Zinc, Copper and TBT which have been detected in the potential dredge material at concentrations greater than OSPAR action levels. It is insufficient to examine the fate of suspended solids alone.
 - No meaningful benthic survey has been submitted to identify the ecology and species that would be affected by the proposed dumping.
 - Salmon farming applications are complicated if or when the location is in an SAC or adjacent to an SAC. Donegal Bay has a several SAC and hence "adjacency" should apply in this case, requiring a more detailed and considered environmental study.
3. The categorisation of the spoils seem reasonable, but the question has to be asked as to whether this is realistic:
- Once subsurface sediments are disturbed they becomes ill defined, very difficult to manage, and it will be impossible to distinguish between the contaminated sediments and those that are not contaminated without a very elaborate sampling protocol.
 - The most contaminated sediments are proposed to be dewatered and put to land, but where is the water proposed to go? One has to bear in mind that the water fraction will contain the banned substance of TBT.
4. Control and monitoring of the operation is inadequately defined. The dumping would need to be overseen by an independent environmental expert to ensure:
- Regular monitoring of the contaminants
 - Ensuring that spoils are dumped where they are supposed to be dumped (it was alleged in 2002 that the spoils were often dumped while travelling between Site A and the harbour to save time and cost).
 - While the application of automatic sampling buoys are helpful to monitor water clarity, oxygen and salinity (per example), these will not pick up the more subtle biological effects which would require the biota to be monitored.

In conclusion we wish to state that our company supports the development of Ireland's marine infrastructure, which we deem to be under developed. However, we have grave concerns for the welfare of the aquaculture and fishing activities as well as the wildlife in Donegal Bay if the spoils are not properly managed.

The development should proceed, so it is a matter of minimising the risk of damage to marine life and farmed marine foods, which requires an extremely strict and professional approach to the dredging. In view of the contaminated nature of the spoils, we conclude that all spoils should be accommodated on land. If there are spoils guaranteed and demonstrably clear of any contamination then these could be dumped at a location identified by means of a detailed dispersion study noted earlier under section 2.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Feenstra

MANAGING DIRECTOR