

Sir, In response to the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill Consultation Document,

Almost every one of the above proposals is entirely focused on introducing even more restrictions on aquaculture business. None of the above proposals make any significant changes to salmon fishery boards and their methods of operation. Although finfish are discussed and salmon are mentioned the elephant in the room is the fact that trout is not mentioned at all except once and that is in relation to tagging of fish caught in nets. There is no mention of the threat of the introduction of trout into freshwater as has been happening for many years and although there is emphasis on removing fish from farms for genetic testing there is nothing designed to tackle the issue of the origins of so called wild salmon stock. Also there is continuing conclusion that sea lice from farms is having an effect on wild stocks *even although there is as yet not one shred of evidence to back this premise up*. This entire document makes massive assumptions and is obviously entirely designed to constrain the aquaculture industry with unnecessary increasing legislation and is blatantly weighted in favour of Fishery Boards and their agenda to dominate all fresh water without any interference from outside control. Government cannot be perceived to be democratic and indeed cannot be taken seriously if any credence is put to these very one sided changes in legislation.

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Highlights & Summary of The Scottish Governments Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill Consultation Document which was posted on their website on the 8th Feb 2012 and signed by Stewart Stevenson, Minister for the Environment & Climate Change.

This was originally a 66 page document so what I have done here is try to condense it by highlighting the recommendations by the Scottish Government. I have grouped each proposal along with the corresponding government summary and recommendation.

Proposal 1

- Finfish farmers to participate in Farm Management Agreements (FMA's)
- Powers for Ministers to prescribe and direct FMA's
- Provisions for arbitration

Proposal 1 Summary and Recommendations

Approve/adopt, monitor and enforce parts of the CoGP, again on a statutory basis as provided for in the 2007 act. This would mean **more targeted regulation and compliance monitoring and enforcement** with 'improvements' in key areas including sea-lice management to the **potential benefit for farmed and wild fish**. This would place some **additional burden on the public sector purse with risk of duplication of compliance monitoring/** cost between public and private sector. Likely reduced work for Audit businesses and possible reduced audit costs for aquaculture.

Proposal 2

- To address the issue of unused fish farm consents (around 43% of total not being used), to ensure they do not act as a barrier to development and growth in aquaculture in Scotland

Proposal 2 Summary and Recommendations

- Either **withdraw consents or levy charges** on those not used for some years or
- **Revoke consents** which may include **for wider 'public interest'** reasons

Proposal 3

- Collection and publication of sea-lice data and
- Provision by businesses of additional surveillance bio-security, mortality and disease data

Proposal 3 Summary and Recommendations

Consideration of the response to this consultation before taking the most appropriate response

Proposal 4

- Temporary or permanent reductions in biomass consents, to help manage sea lice in particular problematic areas/circumstances

Proposal 4 Summary and Recommendations

Ministers to have powers to require SEPA to reduce biomass consents which in turn could lead to significant costs and losses to farm operators and job-losses

Proposal 5

- Enable powers for Ministers to place additional controls on wellboats
- Satellite monitoring of movements
- Additional controls on discharges
- Remote monitoring of wellboat activity/movements/discharges

Proposal 5 Summary and Recommendations

Establish powers for ministers to impose requirements on well boats for monitoring movements, discharges and requirements for filters to remove all stages of sea lice

Proposal 6

- Additional controls on facilities processing salmon

Proposal 6 Summary and Recommendations

Establish powers for ministers to introduce controls on processing facilities to minimise the risk of the spread of sea lice and pathogens and introduce legislation for enforcement

Proposal 7

- Give Scottish Ministers powers to determine a threshold for the incidence of sea lice on farmed fish above which remedial action will be required

Proposal 7 Summary and Recommendations

Give ministers powers to prescribe lower thresholds above which remedial actions will be required to be taken in order to afford necessary protection to wild salmon from potential sea lice impact

Proposal 8

- Introduction of a technical standard for finfish farm equipment for businesses operating in Scotland

Proposal 8 Summary and Recommendations

Adoptions of a technical standard based on a revised CoGP and intervene only where where industry methods are considered to be sub-optimal

Proposal 9

- Create additional powers for Scottish Ministers to take or require samples of fish from fish farms for genetic or other analysis for tracing purposes

Proposal 9 Summary and Recommendations

Give ministers enhanced powers to collect or require samples of fish from farms for genetic or other sampling for tracing purposes in order to supposedly mitigate risks to wild fish from supposed farm escapees

Proposal 10

- Modernise the operation of District Salmon Fishery Boards

Proposal 10 Summary and Recommendations

Introduce a statutory duty on DSFB's to act fairly and transparently underpinning recognised principles of good governance. *In other words business as usual!*

Proposal 11

- Enhance the management of wild salmon fisheries including net stations

Proposal 11 Summary and Recommendations

Introduce statutory carcass tagging of wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout with sanctions for non-compliance and create yet more powers for ministers to take fish for genetic and other sampling. *In particular I would imagine from netting stations*

Proposal 12

- Strengthen existing management and conservation measures under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003

Proposal 12 Summary and Recommendations

Continue to allow management of Scotland's rivers by local fishery boards with no change to current enforcement policies

Proposal 13

- Introduce powers to amend the licensing regime for the introduction of fish to freshwater

Proposal 13 Summary and Recommendations

Give Scottish Ministers reserve powers to recall, restrict or exclude DSFB's jurisdiction in respect of the introduction of fish within their rivers *although sanctions would remain the same as existing legislation*

Proposal 14

- Introduce Fixed Penalty Notices for Marine offences and increase the maximum penalty allowed

Proposal 14 Summary and Recommendations

Increase the maximum penalty to £10,000 for all possible offences currently monitored by Marine Scotland at sea. *Again this is not applicable to DSFB's and only applies to marine sites.*

Conclusion

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