Name

Address

Contact details

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Re: Marine licence applications in North Cornwall and the South West**

**MLA/2023/00307, MLA/2023/00308, MLA/2022/00180**

May I congratulate you on winning your seat. I am sure that your inbox is full currently, but I urge you to look carefully at this issue, and engage with our team.

I am part of a large community group which has been campaigning against the installation of a series of enormous seaweed farms in nearshore areas of the South West.

Whilst there are SIX of these 100+ hectare proposals in the region currently (see table below), either approved by the Marine Management Organisation or pending approval, my particular concern is in regard to Port Quin Bay (MLA/2023/00308 and /00307) and Port Isaac Bay (MLA/2022/00180). Perhaps you have read about our campaigns in the national and local press.

I would like to stress that we are not agitators or a direct action group, we are concerned citizens who are extremely well informed and diligent, and have displayed the utmost patience throughout this process.

Due to a complete lack of community and stakeholder consultation, we were not aware of the above applications until February this year, when it transpired that 00180 (PIB) had already been approved, and the ‘consultation period’ for 00307/308 (PQB) had closed.

Very quickly we discovered that the applicants in these cases were purely commercially driven, with no, or very little, concern for the marine environment, marine wildlife or coastal communities. It has become clear, however, that whilst these companies are certainly ‘bad actors’ in the sector, it is the licensing authority, the MMO, that is most seriously at fault here.

We believe that the MMO is not functioning effectively, and is struggling to cope with the volume of recent seaweed aquaculture applications. The six applications in the South West were submitted by, or in consultation with, one company, Biome Algae, and in particular Biome’s sole director, Dr Angela Mead. In fact, Dr Mead and her employee, Sophie Corrigan, were advising the MMO on how to streamline their licensing process between 20020 and 2022, before submitting these unprecedented applications.

The MMO is understaffed and badly trained, it is unconnected with the marine environment it oversees and makes decisions via desktop reviews with no appreciation of place, it is unregulated and badly led (the MMO board lacks experience in the sector and many members are in ‘acting’ positions, including its chair), it is biased towards applicants not communities, is unapproachable, unclear, dishonest and evasive.

Our campaign has collated enormous amounts of evidence, and has garnered support from multiple conservation groups, members of parliament, landscape managers, fisheries, marine wildlife organisations and members of the public, both locally and nationally. We have also paid for legal assessments and support, and environmental reports.

These responsibilities should not be laid at the feet of beleaguered communities. This campaign has cost us thousand of pounds, thousands of man hours, and has taken a huge mental health toll on all of us.

I encourage you to draw attention to this issue with Steve Reed MP (steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk) and DEFRA, and with South West MPs. Please also engage with members of our team, Barnaby Kay (barnabykay@mac.com) and Hugh Attwater (hughattwater@gmail.com) for further details.

It cannot be overstated what damage will be done environmentally by the MMO’s failings. These are ongoing, time sensitive issues, and I urge you to intervene here before it is too late.

I would like to suggest that it will not be the development of the oceans that will save our planet, it will be leaving the oceans as they are, allowing and encouraging rewilding and regrowth.

Please visit <https://saveourbays.org.uk/> for more information and to view press images.

Kind regards,

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