

Jim Evans

Welsh Fisherman's Association

5 October 2017

Dear Jim,

Turning the tide: Report of the inquiry into the Welsh Government's approach to Marine Protected Area management

Thank you very much for your letter on the Committee's report on the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Wales.

I am very sorry that you feel the report does not properly reflect the written and oral evidence received during the inquiry.

The Committee is always eager to engage with as many individuals and organisations as possible in the course of its inquiries. In this case, the Committee undertook a formal consultation seeking written evidence in response to the inquiry's terms of reference, which received 23 responses. Those responses, as I am sure you will understand, contained differing opinions on the effectiveness of current policies and, consequently, suggested a variety of solutions.

The Committee also commissioned a survey to try to assess the general public's levels of understanding of, and concern for MPAs in Wales. The survey was published on the Committee's website and promoted via Twitter. Several hundred members of the public responded. The public survey undertaken on behalf of the Committee was not intended to be scientific, but was used to collect the opinions



of members of the public who would not ordinarily submit written evidence to a Committee inquiry.

I can assure you that the Committee fully appreciates the contribution stakeholders make to its work, including the time taken to prepare written evidence and to attend meetings to answer questions in person. This Committee considers the Welsh Fishermen's Association to be a key stakeholder.

I sincerely hope you will continue to engage with the Committee's work. Hearing the opinions of fishermen in Wales will be particularly important when, for example, this Committee considers future fisheries policies and legislation which will arise as a result of the UK exiting the European Union.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that the Committee gives full consideration to all contributions in the process of reaching its conclusions and always endeavours to do so in a balanced way. It is this rigour that gives the Committee's work its credibility, which the Committee guards carefully.

Your letter has been sent to Committee members and will be published on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Mike Hedges AM

Chair of the Climate change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee



