

Jim Evans
Welsh Fisherman's Association

8 November 2017

Dear Jim

Thank you for your letter of 23 October.

I am sorry that you feel that my response did not address the concerns raised in your initial letter of 29 September.

In your letter, you state that you “indirectly discovered the details of the Inquiry via Twitter” and “despite our previous history of giving evidence we were not invited to provide evidence directly.” I can confirm that officials supporting the Committee emailed the WFA-CPC using the address office@wfa-cpc.co.uk on 16 December 2016, at the same time as all other consultees. Officials supporting the Committee contacted you on 20 February 2017 to arrange a meeting to discuss matters including the Committee’s inquiry. You also attended a Committee meeting on 30 March 2017. As in my previous letter, I apologise if you did not receive the initial email, but it is evident that the WFA-CPC was not disadvantaged in any way as a result.

Your letter refers to “witnesses that exist to produce responses to inquiries, consultations or questions to A.Ms”. As I said in my previous letter, the Committee seeks evidence from as many individuals and organisations as possible to inform its work. Those who contribute to Committee inquiries do so in good faith. There will be occasions when there are differences of opinion, but I expect stakeholders to treat each other in a respectful manner.



You also say that the Committee's report "relies on the evidence and opinions of a few individuals and organisations with a narrow agenda. This approach will only support conclusions that fit a popular agenda rather than an evidence led and balanced solution". I am satisfied that the conclusions reached by the Committee are balanced and based on the evidence we received and heard. Therefore, the Committee will not reconsider them.

It is important to note that the Cabinet Secretary welcomed the Committee's report and all but one of its recommendations were accepted either in full, or in principle. Given this response, I can only conclude that the Cabinet Secretary shares my view that the report is balanced and based on compelling evidence.

I am sorry you feel that there appears to be no value in contributing to future inquiries of the CCERA Committee and that you would have no confidence in contributing to the Committee's scrutiny of future fisheries policies and legislation. As I said in my previous letter, hearing the voices of Welsh fishermen will be particularly important as arrangements are put in place as a result of the UK exiting the EU. I can assure you that the Committee will continue to provide opportunities for the WFA-CPC to engage with us on these important matters. I sincerely hope that you take those opportunities.

I hope this has addressed some of the concerns outlined in your most recent letter. I recognise that there may, however, be matters on which we will have to agree to disagree. In the interests of openness and transparency, I intend to publish your second letter and this response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely



Mike Hedges AM

Chair of Climate Change, Rural Affairs and Environment Committee

