

"Determination of Aquaculture/Foreshore Licensing Application – T06/233

Cromane Seafoods Ltd., Cromane Lower, Killorglin, Co. Kerry have applied for further authorisation for the bottom cultivation of mussels on one site numbered T06/233 totalling 118.47 ha on the subtidal foreshore in Ballylongford Bay, Shannon Estuary, Co. Kerry.

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has determined that it **is in the public interest** to grant the Aquaculture and Foreshore Licences for this site. In making his determination the Minister considered those matters which by virtue of the Fisheries (Amendment) Act, 1997 and other relevant legislation he was required to have regard.

Such matters include any submissions and observations received in accordance with statutory provisions. The following are the reasons and considerations for the Minister's determination to **grant** the licences sought:-

- This application is for the renewal of aquaculture activity in Ballylongford Bay. Technical advice is to the effect that the waters are suitable for the production of mussels on the seabed;
- No visual impacts arise as there are no structures associated with this development;
- The site is located within the West Shannon Ballylongford Shellfish Growing Waters area and is situated in an area that has been identified as an Area of Opportunity for Aquaculture in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary;
- There is no impact on navigation due to the location and type of aquaculture at the site;
- Access to commercial, recreational, fishing and marine leisure activities in the Shannon Estuary can be accommodated by this project;
- There should be no significant impacts on the marine environment and the quality status of the area should not be adversely affected by aquaculture at this site;
- No significant effects arose regarding wild fisheries;
- The aquaculture at this site should have a positive effect on the economy of the local area;
- The site is located within the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA). An Article 6 Appropriate Assessment has been carried out in relation to aquaculture activities in the SAC and SPA and the reports are available on the Department's website. The Licensing Authority's Natura Conclusion Statement (also available on the Department's website) outlines how the proposed licensing of certain aquaculture activities, including bottom mussel culture at this existing site, in conjunction with specific management actions and mitigation measures, should not significantly and adversely affect the integrity of the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. Site T06/233 in Ballylongford Bay can be licensed from a Natura 2000 perspective with a special licensing condition relating to the timing of activities i.e. that no night time aquaculture activity be carried out at the site, to include travel to and from the site, in order to avoid any interaction with the night roosts of protected bird species;
- The measures set out in the draft Marine Aquaculture Code of Practice prepared by Invasive Species Ireland shall be fully implemented as required in the licensing conditions;
- All issues raised during the public and statutory consultation phase;
- The updated and enhanced Aquaculture and Foreshore licences contain terms and conditions which reflect the environmental protection required under EU and National law."