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Scrutiny Office
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26th August 2015

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
Transfer of Functions

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been requested to submit my views on the transfer of fisheries and other aquatic resources from the Minister for Economic Development to the Minister for the Environment.

I have long held the view that all fishery matters should be overseen by the Environment Department especially as the Marine Resources Department operate under that umbrella. It would therefore seem logical and reasonable for the Department, whose Key Objectives are, **'To conserve the marine resources of Jersey'** and **'To protect the marine environment, making decisions and basing actions on the results of sound scientific surveillance and monitoring'** should take full responsibility for the protection and management of fish stocks and the marine environment.

I believe that there should be more focus on introducing good management practices to ensure that Jersey has a long term sustainable and viable commercial fishery.

Although I was pleased to read the recent press release by the Minister for the Environment regarding protection of bass stocks, this is long overdue and is unfortunately only a reaction to the measures being brought in by the EU and British Government which Jersey are obliged to implement under the current Fisheries Management Agreement.

I would contend that in order to deliver the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, which are to **'deliver positive, sustainable, economic, social and environmental outcomes for Jersey'** and **'effective, efficient and sustainable**

management and use of public funds', Jersey needs to be proactive and not reactive when it comes to managing local fish stocks and protecting the marine environment

Certainly, if the Minister for the Environment is to take full control of fishery matters, there are many issues regarding the proper management of fish stocks that need to be addressed. For too long there have been promises that 'reviews', 'strategies' and 'consultations' would enable progress in relation to the protection of stocks and effective management. Sadly, these have been missed opportunities, and most recently, the results of the 3-month Marine Resources Consultation which was launched by the Marine Resources Department in July 2013 at a cost to the tax payer of £34,652 has not even been published. This is hardly an effective use of public funds.

The key word in the Strategic Plan is 'sustainable' and at present Jersey is not fishing sustainably. There is a growing demand by consumers and supermarkets for sustainably caught fish. To satisfy this increasing demand there needs to be a change in how we fish, and how commercial fishermen are supported when much needed controls are implemented. Effective conservation measures are required for the long-term benefit of a viable and diverse fishing industry. Unfortunately, politics and the demands of commercial fishermen has often lead to scientific evidence in relation to declining fish stocks being ignored in favour of short term financial gain.

Conservation is not at odds with a successful commercial fishery, in fact it is fundamentally important to it. Protected nursery areas, protection of the sea bed, effective Minimum Landing Sizes which allow fish to breed before capture, and restrictions on destructive and indiscriminate fishing methods, all need to be addressed by the Minister for the Environment. This will benefit the fishing industry, recreational fishermen, the environment, tourism and the whole local economy.

Yours sincerely

Derek Buesnel