

Hon Nathan Guy
Minister for Primary Industries
Executive Wing
Parliament House
Wellington

20 February 2017

Dear Minister

Marlborough Sounds Scallop Fishery – Next Steps – Ministerial Working Group

Thank you for your letter of 11 February 2017 in response to earlier correspondence on the above from me but written on behalf of an alliance of Marlborough community and recreational organisations (Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association, the Pelorus Boating Club and the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association).

The purpose of this letter is outline our reaction to the results of the scientific survey referred to by you in your response, advise as to a more conciliatory note from industry representatives and respectfully suggest a way forward to resolve this long running matter in a way that is advantageous to all stakeholders.

We (non-commercial interests) recently attended a MPI initiated presentation of the 2016 Biomass Survey results in Nelson. I am pleased to report that industry (the Chair and CEO of the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company) as well as iwi representatives attended. Both at the meeting and in subsequent discussions non-commercial groups have noted a softening attitude to previously seemingly entrenched industry positions.

From our perspective the bad news arising from the survey (which seemed to be accepted by all, including your officials) was that the results gave **no indication** of a recovery in the resource.

The good news, from our perspective, was that the downward plunge in overall biomass in the Sounds scallop fishery was, arguably, showing signs of levelling out.

Some would say this was predictable given the removal of a major stressor from the fishery – fishing pressure - but still something of a relief for us. The fishery may not have been pushed through a no-return tipping point.

Our proposal to now capitalise on this window of opportunity for the good of the Sounds fishery is fairly straightforward.

You as the responsible Minister should, we respectfully suggest and urge, convene a Scallop Sounds Working Group composed of all stakeholders.

A **senior** MPI official (at, say, Director level) should be tasked with bringing the Working Group together and coordinating an action plan with two overall elements.

The first would involve a collaborative review by the Working Group of the governance of the Fishery with the objective of a more inclusive group being tasked with making recommendations to the Minister as to the operational management of the fishery. That is, a review and reworking of the current Memorandum of Understanding as it relates to the Marlborough Sounds scallop fishery.

Once progress has been made on that aspect we see the second element as relatively straight forward - the working up of an agreed package of operational management measures.

The above work stream can commence in parallel with the up coming round of further public consultation as proposed by your officials.

Minister, we appreciate the amount of effort you and your officials have put in to try to arrest the collapse of this much-treasured resource, to say nothing of the efforts of volunteer groups such as ourselves. We strongly suggest the time is now right for you, as responsible minister, to steer the management of this resource towards a sustainable future in the manner we suggest.

Naturally we would be happy to come to Wellington to meet with you, such is the degree of our concern.

We look forward to hearing from you.

For and on behalf of the:



Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association
Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association
Pelorus Boating Club

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