



HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

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15 May 2020

Victoria Prentis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Victoria,

EM 7153/20: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 as regards specific measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the fishery and aquaculture sector

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) on the above Proposal, which was considered by our Environment Sub-Committee on 13 May 2020.

We note that, in addition to the measures enabled by this Proposal, you and the Devolved Administrations have announced domestic schemes to support the UK's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

In your EM you stated that the UK has almost fully committed its EMFF funding, and as there is little budget left the impact of these measures on the UK is likely to be limited. Based on the figures you provided, approximately £16.6million of the UK's EMFF funding had not been allocated as of the start of the year. Is there any scope or demand for that funding to be repurposed as permitted by these measures?

In addition, is it possible that some of the fishing and aquaculture activity due to be funded by the already-committed EMFF funding may not take place due to COVID-19, thus releasing that funding and making it available for redistribution? If so, is that possibility being monitored, and when might the funds become available and how will that be communicated to the industry?

Regarding the storage aspect of the EU's measures, would having the capacity to support the storage of fisheries and aquaculture products be beneficial to the UK's fishing sector at this time, and if so what is being done to increase that capacity?

And given your assessment that these measures are of limited use in the UK because the EMFF budget is nearly fully-committed, are you aware of similar issues in other Member States? If so, are further EU-wide actions being planned to support the fishing industry?

The Committee continues to take an active interest in this matter and we would therefore welcome being kept updated on developments. We look forward to a response within ten working days.

I am copying this letter to Sir William Cash MP, Chair of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee, Jessica Mulley, Clerk of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee, Les Saunders, Cabinet Office, and John Leach, Scrutiny Co-ordinator, DEFRA.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Kinnoull', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee