



Environmental Audit Committee

Rt Hon. Emma Reynolds MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House of Parliament 17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

9 June 2026

Sent by email only

Consultation on Bottom Trawling

Dear Secretary of State,

On 5 June 2025, the Environmental Audit Committee published its report *Governing the Marine Environment*, which recommended a ban on seabed-damaging practices within offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Shortly after the publication of our report, the Government announced a Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Stage 3 consultation on proposals to ban bottom trawling across 42 MPAs. In your evidence to the Committee on 10 March 2026, you confirmed that the consultation closed in September 2025, having received more than 20,000 responses, and that officials were analysing these responses, with an update to be provided in due course. It is now several months since the consultation closed, and the Government has yet to publish its response.

During our inquiry, the Committee heard compelling evidence on the extent of damage caused by bottom-towed fishing gear to seabed habitats and the wider marine ecosystem. Given the importance of these protections, and the high level of public engagement with the consultation process, the Committee would welcome an update on the Government's progress.

We would be grateful if you could set out the current status of the analysis of consultation responses, when the Government intends to publish its response, and the anticipated timetable for the implementation of any resulting measures.

The Committee intends to hold an evidence session in September 2027, two years on from the Government's response to our report, to examine progress against the inquiry's recommendations, and looks forward to continued engagement with the Government on progress in this area.

We would appreciate a response by 29 June.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toby Perkins'.

Mr Toby Perkins MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee