

Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



1 September 2026

Legislation and
Governance Unit

Dear Alistair

Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Fisheries Act 2020

We are writing to ask the EFRA Committee to consider undertaking dedicated scrutiny of the UK government's memorandum on the post-legislative assessment of the Fisheries Act 2020.

While we welcome the publication of the memorandum, we do have a number of concerns about the process and outcomes, which we think merit further attention to ensure that the Fisheries Act delivers its full potential.

It is our understanding that the memorandum has been prepared largely through a desk-based exercise, with no dedicated stakeholder input or consultation and instead evidence drawn from already published reports.

There are several aspects of the assessment that merit scrutiny, including the government's continued reluctance to consider making fisheries objectives legally binding, delays in the rollout of Fisheries Management Plans and the citing of restrictions on bottom towed gear in marine protected areas as a measure of successful implementation despite ongoing delays in bringing these forward. There is also little recognition of the ongoing setting of Total Allowable Catches above scientific advice by the UK and other Coastal States, which is undermining the implementation of the Act's objectives.

We would be grateful, therefore, if the Committee would consider scrutinising the government's assessment of whether the Act has achieved its policy objectives and has been implemented effectively. This could include a call for written evidence and a small number of oral evidence sessions, including one with the fisheries minister.

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Head of UK, ClientEarth

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