



Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei

Minister of Fisheries

Minister of Housing

5 November 2009

Dear stakeholder / iwi

I am writing to you on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith, the Minister for Economic Development, Gerry Brownlee, and myself, as the group of Ministers designated as responsible for bringing forward aquaculture reform proposals to Government. We are releasing, for your comment, the report and recommendations produced by the independent Aquaculture Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in order to seek your views to inform decisions by Government on reform of aquaculture legislation.

The Government is committed to creating an environment that is conducive to sustainable economic growth. Developing an effective and enabling regulatory regime for aquaculture is an important part of this wider goal.

The complexity, cost, and uncertainty of the current regime, along with poor incentives for development, are impeding aquaculture growth. No new space has been created under the 2004 aquaculture reforms and it is unlikely that any new space will be created for several more years. The ability to research and innovate is being stifled by inflexible rules that limit the ability to advance new technologies and higher value species. This represents a significant opportunity cost in terms of foregone aquaculture development and income.

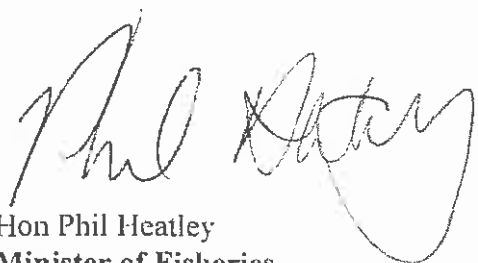
The TAG was established in August 2009, to provide Government with independent recommendations to enable the development of sustainable aquaculture in New Zealand. I attach their final report "Re-Starting Aquaculture" as a platform to receive feedback on how to shape the reforms. We acknowledge the hard work of the TAG and the comprehensive job they have done in a tight timeframe to address the poor incentives and regulatory blocks to aquaculture growth under the current regime.

The TAG report provides a good foundation for progressing much needed reforms. We are however interested in wider views on adjustments to current arrangements that will enable aquaculture growth. In particular, we would appreciate proposals on how to deliver the settlement through the revised approach proposed by the TAG. We also would like your ideas on how to make the interface between aquaculture and fishing more efficient, for example through improved catch effort reporting to support assessment of the effect of aquaculture on fishing.

We would welcome receipt of views from stakeholders and iwi on the TAG report and other suggestions to enable aquaculture development. Because we want to improve legislative arrangements without delay, we intend that Cabinet considers proposals for reform early in the New Year. In order to consider your views, we therefore seek submissions by Wednesday 16 December 2009.

Please provide your written responses to aquaculturesubmissions@fish.govt.nz or Aquaculture Submissions, Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington. Further information can be found on the Ministry of Fisheries website at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/default.htm>.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Heatley', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Phil Heatley
Minister of Fisheries