

A template letter for writing to your MP about fishing

Britain's Maritime Resources & the Great Repeal Bill

You may like to use all or part of our Chairman's letter to his MP as a template if you wish to write to your own MP expressing your concern that the UK does not end up with a Common Fisheries Policy Mark 2 and thus betray our fishermen a second time. We also need to renounce the 1964 London Convention, so that other countries do not acquire rights to fish in our waters.

Dear.....

I write as a constituent as well as on behalf of concerned members of CIB and friends in the fishing industry. The surrender of our seas as a "common resource" to the EU was a particularly shameful act, as HMG was fully aware that the then EEC had no legal basis for the Common Fisheries Policy which it introduced into our negotiations to join at the last minute. There is now opportunity for a root and branch rectification of this disastrous decision.

* By international law all living marine species within the 200 nautical mile/median line zone belongs to the coastal state.

* A British Act of Parliament (Fishery Limits 1976 Act) established our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 nautical miles/median from our coast.

* Under the term of the European Communities Act 1972, this solely national resource was shared with every other EU member state.

* Our friends in the fishing industry advise us of the

following figures.

UK catches in UK waters amount to 461,047 tonnes value £593,600,000

UK catches in EU waters amount to 88,126 tonnes value £102,136,000

EU catches in UK waters amount to 674,601 tonnes value £711,224,000

EU catches in EU waters amount to 568,575 tonnes value £777,081,000

* Repealing the ECA 1972 and invoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty reverts control of the British EEZ from Brussels to Westminster Control, returning to the Fishery Limits Act 1976 and the London Fishery Convention of 1964.

* In the London Fishery Convention of 1964, the UK gave mainly to France and four other countries rights to fish within our 6 -12 mile territorial limit zone. From 1986 the UK can renounce this agreement by giving two years notice. We urge that this should be done **at the same time as invoking Article 50**, so there is no overlap time.

* From the Brexit White Paper

To provide legal certainty over our exit from the EU, we will introduce the Great Repeal Bill to remove the European Communities Act 1972 from the statute book and convert the "acquis"- the body of existing EU law into domestic law. This means that, wherever practical and appropriate, the same rules and laws will apply on the day after we leave the EU as they did before.

* The fisheries *acquis* includes the main fisheries regulation 1380/2013, which establishes who catches what, where and how much in UK waters. So the figures quoted above would become British Fishing Policy.

* It seems incredible that HMG appears to have decided to run a policy based on regulation 1380/2013 so that EU vessels will continue to plunder 59% of the British people's resource.

* HMG has made much of not being "half in and half out" of the EU and characterised the EEA/EFTA as that sort of arrangement. Yet Norway and Iceland, which are in EEA/EFTA, exercise whole and sole control over their own national fisheries. As with agriculture, they make their own arrangements.

* We urge that the UK's arrangements should be no less sovereign over our own EEZ and territorial waters.

* We also believe that the whole of the existing CFP quota regime is unfit for purpose and should be scrapped. Our expert colleagues in Fishing for Leave have prepared proposals for control by permitted days at sea, as currently used in the Faeroe Islands. This is far more practicable and removes the incentive to cheat. It can provide a more effective system with local ecological controls for the very different fishing grounds in our waters. Fishing rights should not be individual property but remain under public control, inalienably for the nation.

* We also urge that immediate preparations should be made for an adequate force of Royal Navy **Fisheries Protection Vessels**, which could also provide a platform for HM Customs and Excise and Immigration Control purposes.

Yours sincerely,

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