

**To: The Honourable Stuart Nash
Minister of Fisheries**
stuart.nash@parliament.govt.nz

Cc:

Eugenie Sage, Minister of Conservation, eugenie.sage@parliament.govt.nz
David Parker, Minister for the Environment, david.parker@parliament.govt.nz
John Leggett, Marlborough Mayor, mayor@marlborough.govt.nz
Hans Versteegh, Marlborough District Council, Environmental Science and Policy Group Manager, hans.versteegh@marlborough.govt.nz

February 17, 2020

Tēna koe Minister Nash

Request for moratorium on new applications and renewals of marine farms in the Marlborough Sounds

1. We represent several Marlborough environmental and community groups and are supported in this request by the Environmental Defence Society.
2. This letter is in support of particular concerns raised by the East Bay Conservation Society in their letter to you, dated 3 February 2020, regarding marine farm renewal applications attempting to gazump the proposed new rules for aquaculture in the Marlborough Sounds.
3. We also note the request from Marlborough District Council to you, dated 5 August 2019, for an urgent meeting to discuss the increase in applications for marine farm renewal permits significantly earlier than their expiry date.
4. The Marlborough Sounds is currently caught in a regulatory twilight zone: The Marlborough Environment Plan will be launched on February 20 but aquaculture provisions are being handled separately as a variation to the Plan, and these have yet to be publicly notified.
5. Drawing on experience under the previous Resource Management Plan and greater scientific knowledge, the variation, once publicly massaged through the planning process, is expected to identify appropriate sites and intensity for marine farming within the Marlborough Sounds.

6. The community has not yet seen this variation or had their say. In the meantime marine farmers are applying for consent renewals to get ahead of anticipated changes.
7. This is not in the interests of sustainable management of the Marlborough Sounds or respectful of community concerns. A pause is needed to ensure a fair and balanced approach to management of this sensitive environment.
8. **We, the undersigned, formally request that the Government brings down a moratorium preventing further marine farm applications until the aquaculture variation to the Marlborough Environment Plan has been progressed to a stage where it is beyond appeal.**
9. There is precedent for this – moratoriums on marine farm permit applications in the Marlborough Sounds were imposed between 1996-1999 to allow aquaculture provisions in the regional coastal plan to be progressed, and nationwide from 2001-2004 while new legislation was prepared to ensure further development was sustainable and environmentally appropriate.
10. We seek your leadership to do the same again. We need your support to ensure the integrity of the Marlborough District Council planning process and to give the Marlborough Sounds environment its best chance for a sustainable future.

Thank you for your urgent consideration of this matter.

Ngā mihi

Clare Pinder, Guardians of the Sounds

Andrew Caddie, Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents Association

Rob Schuckard, Friends of Nelson Haven

Tim Newsham, Marlborough Environment Centre

Gary Taylor, Environmental Defence Society

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