

Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance submission of 9 September 2022

PE1951/Y: Reinstate inshore coastal limit on the use of dredge and trawl fishing gears

Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA) represent just under 400 inshore boats nationally. These boats are static, mobile, line and dive, indeed the majority of members are static boats. We also have members who are processors, exporters, gear makers, coastal community members and scientists. These numbers can be verified with Marine Scotland. We believe in developing regional and national policy which allows coastal communities to sustainably thrive, and we do not believe this petition's outcomes would support these goals.

We are not externally grant funded; we exist to support inshore fishing communities nationally, having been established in December 2016. Our members are to be found East, West, North and South in Scotland.

We do not support this petition. We would rather work transparently with Scottish Government and with Inshore Fisheries Groups to establish and develop sustainable management measures by majority consensus and partnership.

We believe the frameworks already exist to allow sustainable and inclusive policies for fishing to be developed, indeed members of CIFA and other groups both fishing orientated and from the wider community including environmental NGOs have been able to engage change democratically through Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs), the Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation (IFMAC) Group, Fisheries Management and Conservation Group (FMAC), and other governmental frameworks. Gear alterations, management and pilot projects can be established, they already exist. If some projects don't gain majority support or if the resources are not available to practically deliver them then we understand we must either accept this decision or work on solutions through the current frameworks.

We appreciate many of our own ideas in the past and potentially in the future may not gain wider support, if reasonable process and due consideration of those engaged have not supported our proposals we accept this. We also understand that an alteration of initial proposals in

collaboration with our peers may result in solutions which are more suitable for all parties. We believe in process working with our neighbours and using the structures which already enable joint working and joint solutions. We feel fortunate to have these structures to allow democratic policy to be formed.

We have only just been alerted to this petition as it has not been shared through the normal inshore fishing channels, and therefore we suspect that many fishing and coastal communities will not have contributed their thoughts to the petition being unaware of its existence. However, if change is enacted based on the petition it may have huge socio-economic and sustainability consequences to those coastal communities who were not aware of this petition, but instead engaging through the recommended government channels such as Inshore Fisheries Groups.

We would urge all partners to start working within the existing frameworks which Scottish Government have provided to help develop sustainable fisheries policy, instead of relying on public campaigning, parliamentary petitions and court cases by default. We accept these routes may be viable if there are no fair frameworks for change in place, but that is not the case in this instance. If a proposal does not receive support by the majority of engaged stakeholders, it seems democratic to work with other engaged parties to find common ground. Such an approach may even result in more progressive, sustainable and holistic policies.