



December 19, 2025

licence@mara.gov.ie

RE: Maritime Usage Licence Application - Reference MUL230036

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the application to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Usage Licence by SEATEC to undertake the salvage operation of the cargo of the SS Ohio, a World War I era steamship located 142 NM from the Irish territorial waters at a depth of 330 meters in the North Atlantic Ocean.

It is essential that the sea-fishing and aquaculture sectors are fully recognised and given a high priority as a long-standing, pre-existing, and traditional activity in the marine environment as the **proposed salvage operation** is being evaluated. Fishers and aquaculture site holders are primary food producers dependent upon certain marine areas which are particularly important for food production.

This primary production is critical to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities is reflected in the Government's Food Vision 2030 policy.

To inform the DAFM comments, the observations of the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) on the application were requested.

The MI noted that, due to some ambiguity with the positional data given, this information should be confirmed with the requestors as the position on the Marine Atlas indicates the wreck near the northern edge of the Porcupine Bank Nephrops fishing grounds.

Assuming the area of operation lies outside of the fishing grounds mentioned, and appropriate notices to mariners are given, it is anticipated there would be no lasting impact on fish stocks or fishing activities.

The MI further recommend that the proximity of the wreck to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME) Area 51 should be checked, further details of which are provided in the MI's full report attached.

BIM recognised the proximity of the proposed salvage works to the Porcupine Nephrops fishing grounds and while the effects on fisheries and aquaculture is deemed minimal, BIM encourage timely notification of fishers, through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register [Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions](#) should be undertaken. Additional,

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usual channels of communication, such as Marine Notices, the Producer Organisations and local media including Marine Times where possible covering the impacted area.

DAFM recognises that the applicant's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of **proposed salvage operation** on commercial sea fishing activities needs to be given consideration within the context of the requirements set out under the Maritime Area Planning Act and the National Marine Planning Framework. (NMPF). The principles in the NMPF of avoiding, minimising, or mitigating impacts on access to existing activities (including specific policies on Fisheries and Aquaculture) should be followed and any proposed development activity should incorporate the principle of maximising coexistence with established activities in marine areas.

All relevant fishing organisations should receive any applicable Marine Notice/s, and be made aware of any proposed works, at the earliest opportunity to ensure the optimum coordination of activities and to limit potential disturbances to fishing activities to the greatest extent possible.

Please also find attached document(s) from the MI and BIM which provide further comments for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Marine Divisions
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine