



April 7, 2026

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RE: MUL260005 Wexford County Council

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on MUL260005, submitted by Wexford County Council, to undertake environmental surveys and ground investigation works within the River Slaney.

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 surveys are 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.

The importance of the seafood sector to our coastal communities is highlighted in BIM's [Business of Seafood 2024](#) which sets out that the total GDP of the seafood sector was €1.24 billion in 2024, and employment increased to 16,874 (direct and indirect jobs) from 15,673 in 2023.

To inform the DAFM comments, the observations of the Marine Institute (MI), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) on the application were requested. The MI advise that, considering the short-term nature and small spatial coverage, the proposed survey operations should not interfere with fishing activities fish ecology/biology or aquaculture. Cumulative impacts should be given consideration with regard to similar activities proposed/planned to take place in close spatial and temporal proximity to the survey area.

BIM acknowledges the proposed works will have minimal impact on aquaculture sites downstream from the proposed activity. <https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer/>

However, timely notification to aquaculture producers and fishers on the ground, particularly during the timing around proposed sediment and borehole works should be taken through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register ([Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions](#)) and the aquaculture viewer, linked above.

This will allow aquaculture producers to make informed food safety decisions around timing of shellfish harvesting during the scheduled proposed activities.

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SFPA note that negative impacts are not expected on commercial fisheries, aquaculture, and food safety.

DAFM recognises that the developer's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of the surveys 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.

While the proposed survey works are not anticipated to impact on inshore fishers, relevant local fishing organisations should nevertheless be included on the provision of any Notices to Mariners and be made aware of any survey works at the earliest opportunity.

Please also find attached documents from the MI, BIM and SFPA which provide further comments for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Marine Divisions

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine