[redacted]

To: licence@mara.gov.ie
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority, Menapia House, Drinagh, Wexford, Y35 RF29

Submission on MUL260006 Uisce Éireann site investigation surveys Liscannor Bay

Dear Sir or Madam,

I live about a mile from Cregg. My family has swum at Cregg Beach for more than 50 years, and so have I. As a young person from this area, I want the evidence supporting decisions about the bay to be sound. I ask MARA to address each of the numbered matters below in its decision.

Surveys informing a project with a 55 year consent

On 10 July 2026, MARA granted Uisce Éireann Maritime Area Consent MAC260002 for a term of 55 years. That consent is not development permission. The present application concerns temporary surveys intended to inform the design and environmental assessment of the proposed outfall.

The revised Natura material states that the surveys will provide baseline environmental and geotechnical information to support the design and assessment of the long sea outfall. At the later development-consent stage, any environmental impact assessment will have to describe the existing environment and the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, together with the main reasons for the option selected and a comparison of their environmental effects.

Uisce Éireann's pre-application documentation identified five possible discharge locations at the Liscannor and Cregg ends of the bay. The present licence application covers the Cregg survey corridor. I therefore ask MARA to state clearly that the surveys licensed under MUL260006 do not provide comparative survey evidence concerning the other identified discharge locations.

Uisce Éireann's consent documentation states that trenchless construction is preferred where feasible and that the installation method will be informed by the results of the proposed surveys. The revised Natura material similarly states that the investigations are intended to assess trenchless construction feasibility. I therefore ask MARA to identify precisely what conclusions this survey programme is intended to support and to ensure that its decision does not treat a future open-trench method as environmentally assessed by this licence.

The application documentation refers to a maximum outfall pipeline length of 1,500 metres, while MARA's consent map states 'Length of pipe: 1690m'. These may represent different measurements, but the documents I have reviewed do not explain the difference. MARA should clarify what each figure represents and which figure was used when assessing the scope and effects of the proposed surveys.

Cregg is a bathing place and a statutory process is under way

People have bathed at Cregg for generations. A tourism survey of Lahinch signed in July 1942 records 'Bathing at any point along above stretch and also at Cregg.' In autumn 2026, 194 people nominated

Cregg Beach in Clare County Council's public-participation process to identify bathing waters for 2027. Under the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008, the Council identifies bathing waters annually and maintains a profile for each water it identifies, including sources that may cause pollution.

I do not suggest that the nomination itself makes Cregg a formally identified bathing water. It does, however, provide current evidence of public bathing use and of an active statutory public-participation process that MARA should take into account.

Clare County Council told MARA on 17 April 2026 that secondary treatment would not guarantee no impact, 'in particular on human health at this location given its recreational use'. That observation concerns the proposed wastewater project rather than suggesting that the surveys themselves will cause such effects. It nevertheless demonstrates why a reliable and publicly accessible water-quality baseline at Cregg is important.

An internal inconsistency in the revised Natura material

The revised Natura material describes intertidal trial pits, intertidal cone penetration tests and tracked dynamic sampling at Cregg Beach. It also states that intertidal surveys will be scheduled around tidal cycles.

However, when screening the qualifying interests of the Inagh River Estuary SAC, **Table 2-6 states that the surveys are restricted to 'offshore, subtidal, and upstream freshwater areas'.** It relies on that description when concluding that there is no credible pathway to the SAC's intertidal habitats. The same table describes activities as confined to offshore waters when screening certain intertidal bird interests, despite the separately described intertidal investigations at Cregg.

MARA's own screening report of 7 August 2026 lists the Inagh River Estuary SAC at 0 km from the licence area and screens it out with the words 'No significant S-P-R'. If that conclusion relied on the same offshore-only description, it needs to be revisited.

I am not asserting that the intertidal works will affect a qualifying habitat or species. I am asking MARA to reconcile these descriptions before relying on the screening conclusions. An assessment that excludes a pathway on the stated basis that no intertidal activity is proposed must be reconsidered if the application elsewhere expressly includes intertidal machinery, trial pits and probing.

What I ask MARA to do

1. State in its decision that the surveys under MUL260006 are confined to the Cregg corridor, do not provide comparative survey evidence concerning the other discharge locations identified in the pre-application documentation, and should not later be described as such evidence.
2. Clarify what the figures of 1,500 metres and 1,690 metres each represent and identify the figure used when assessing the scope and effects of the proposed surveys.
3. Under Schedule 8, paragraph 10 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, require relevant water-quality data to be provided to Clare County Council as bathing-water authority and to the Health Service Executive in the format requested by those bodies. Separately, consider requiring

publication under paragraph 17A or explain how the resulting environmental data will be made publicly accessible.

4. To make the data useful to those bodies, require water-quality sampling to include the bathing-water indicators E. coli and intestinal enterococci at Cregg and Lahinch, including sampling during summer conditions and following heavy rainfall.

5. State whether the Health Service Executive was consulted or invited to comment on this application. If it was not, explain whether MARA considered consultation necessary in light of Clare County Council's recorded concern regarding recreational use and human health.

6. Require the public's right to pass and repass along the strand and walkway at Cregg to be maintained throughout the surveys, as MARA required in Condition 19.2 of MAC260002.

7. Reconcile the description of intertidal trial pits, probing and machinery at Cregg with the statements in Table 2-6 that the surveys are restricted to offshore, subtidal and upstream freshwater areas. Reconsider any screening conclusion that relied on the absence of intertidal activity and give a reasoned finding for each potentially relevant qualifying interest or special conservation interest.

8. If, after completing its own assessment, MARA cannot exclude adverse effects on the integrity of a European site on the basis of complete, precise and definitive findings capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt, it should not grant the licence.

I am not asking MARA to determine the proposed outfall in this licence decision. I am asking it to ensure that the scope and limitations of these surveys are recorded accurately, that the Natura assessment addresses the intertidal works actually proposed, and that the resulting environmental information is available to the public bodies concerned.

I also support the submission made by the Calluragh Cregg Lahinch Wastewater Action Group.

Yours faithfully,



References

MARA, Maritime Area Consent MAC260002, Map 1 of 2 (drawing MAC260002-001, 18 May 2026), 'Length of pipe: 1690m'.

MARA, Maritime Area Consent MAC260002, 10 July 2026: term of 55 years; Condition 3.6 (not planning permission); Condition 19.2 (public access). maritimeregulator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/MAC_MAC260002.pdf

MAC pre-application form, July 2025, released under AIE_006_2026 (five discharge locations).

Uisce Éireann, MAC application form MAC1, MAC260002, sections 2.2 and 2.3 ('a maximum of 1,500m') and section 2.4, and response to MARA of 10 June 2026 (installation method and corridor), released under AIE_006_2026.

AQUAFACT, revised Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement, August 2026, section 2.2 and Tables 2-1 and 2-6, pages 20 to 22, 36, 42 and 43. maritimeregulator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/MUL260006-Attachment-4.3-SISAA-Updated.pdf

I.T.A. Topographical and General Survey 1942/3, Lahinch, signed James Henchy, Surveyor, 20 July 1942 (Clare County Library). clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/ita_survey_1942/lahinch.htm

Clare County Council, public participation, Identification of Bathing Waters 2027 (closed 25 September 2026).

Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008), Regulations 4 and 5, Schedule 1 and Regulation 15(5). irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2008/si/79

Clare County Council, observation on MUL260006, 17 April 2026. maritimeregulator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/20.04.2026-Clare-County-Council-Observation-MUL260006.pdf

MARA, Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report, MUL260006, 7 August 2026 (Table 2). maritimeregulator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/MUL260006_Uisce-Eireann_Appropriate-Assessment-Screening-and-Determination-Report_APPR_redacted.pdf

NPWS, Inagh River Estuary SAC (000036), qualifying interests. npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000036

Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, section 119(3) and Schedule 8, paragraphs 10 and 17A.

EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended, Article 5(1)(d) and Annex IV.

Holohan v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17); Waddenzee (C-127/02); Connelly v An Bord Pleanála [2018] IESC 31.