



May 25, 2026

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**RE: MUL260036 – Port of Cork Company**

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on MUL260036, submitted by Port of Cork Company to conduct marine environmental surveys.

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 activity 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), Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) on the application were requested

The MI advise that the site investigation works will have minimal to no impact any fish stocks, fisheries or aquaculture sites.

The SFPA advise that the works involved in the proposed site investigation survey are temporary in nature and will not adversely affect existing wild fisheries in the area.

BIM confirm that there is no aquaculture activity intersecting with the proposed MUL boundary. However, BIM highlight the existing aquaculture activities East of Haulbowline Island, this includes the blue mussel fishery order T05-002OFO along with aquaculture site T05-522B which is located in Rostellan shellfish waters and intersects with Cork Harbour SPA - 004030. <https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer>

There is very little fishing activity in the proposed area. However, there are inshore fishing activities such as potting (lobster, shrimp, whelk and crab) and herring fishery up the river mouth, occurring at various times of year which are located within and outside Cork Harbour. <https://atlas.marine.ie/#?c=51.8247:-8.1951:11>. A challenge for the inshore fleet is that vessels under 12 metres are mostly not required to carry Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). This means their activities are less visible in official data, and the true scale and patterns of inshore fishing are not fully captured.

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Timely notification to aquaculture producers and fishers on the ground, through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions should be taken. This will allow them to make informed food safety decisions around timing of shellfish harvesting and fishing activity during the scheduled proposed activities.

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.

Please also find attached documents from the MI, SPPA 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*