

Subject: What the sea means to me

Dear Alasdair McDonnell MLA, Michael McGimpsey MLA, Anna Lo MLA, Jimmy Spratt MLA

The NI Marine Bill, which was finally introduced to the NI Assembly in February is the most important marine legislation in Northern Ireland's history and it is vital to get it right. The bill needs to fully protect our precious marine environment and to ensure that there are sufficient powers to ensure that the marine resources of our local waters are managed and developed sustainably for generations to come.

I support the work of the Northern Ireland Marine Taskforce. I agree with the points that they have made around a number of crucial issues concerning the bill.

A successful Act will put nature first by introducing effective measures to protect our marine heritage; such as highly protected areas. We must take the steps that will secure a future for our marine environment in a way that benefits nature and humanity.

Nature is struggling to survive – it needs our help. Will future generations look back and ask why we did so little to protect and nurture our seas when we had the chance?

I am asking you to support the bill and I would particularly support affirmative action on the following. We need ensure that we have:

- A local, ecologically coherent, network of Marine Conservation Zones, including highly protected areas, that will protect our seas from harmful human activity
- An overhaul of our failed local marine governance model with a single authority such as a NI Marine Management Organisation
- The timing of the Marine Spatial Plan - the blueprint for how we use our seas— and the selection of Marine Conservation Zones need to be synchronised and integrated

I support these measures do you?

I would ask that you respond to this letter by writing to me and letting me know your views on these issues.

I look forward to your response

Yours
Neil Galway
QUB