Mr Geoff Bowles
Marine Consents & Environment Unit
Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Marine Environment Division
Second Floor, Area D
3-8 Whitehall Place
London SW1A 2HH

cc: Dr Chris Vivian (Cefas), Dr Mike Waldock (Cefas)

15th March 2007

Dear Geoff,

Re: FEPA 1985 – Port of Tyne Authority Licence 31995/04/1 – Confined Disposal Of Contaminated Dredge Material

Following our letter of 20th December 2006 to Andy Dixon at Defra regarding the above disposal scheme, the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is becoming increasingly concerned at the lack of information disseminating to us about the trial. We were happy to receive an acknowledgement of our letter from Dr Chris Vivian at Cefas on 12th January, but feel that a response from Defra is now over due, and would appreciate an indication as to when Defra feels that it may be in a position to answer the serious questions raised in our December correspondence.

We were assured by John Maslin in February 2005 that Defra was committed to an open review process involving all stakeholders. It recently came to our attention that a stakeholder meeting was hosted on 22nd February 2007 by the Port of Tyne at their head office. We can only assume that MCS was not invited as a matter of oversight, but we are now requesting a copy of the minutes of that meeting under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

MCS is also requesting, under the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of all documents, minutes and correspondence relating to the Government's review of this trial. We similarly request copies of any new licence applications for disposal of contaminated dredge material using this method, and information relating to plans to extend this capping trial to other ports.

You are no doubt aware that Secretary of State David Miliband's constituency is South Shields, adjacent to the Port of Tyne. It is our intention to now write to the Environment Secretary outlining our concerns.

Many thanks for your time and attention in this matter. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Bell
Coastal Pollution Officer
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