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Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Mr Robert Latimer

CCU Ref: 259370

Robert@latimers.com

6 September 2006

Dear Mr Latimer

CEFAS REPORT AND CAPPING OF CONTAMINATED MATERIAL IN OPEN WATER

Thank you for your email of 23 June to David Miliband about the trial disposal and capping of contaminated dredged material from the Port of Tyne. I have been asked to reply and I am sorry for the extended delay in doing so.

First of all, please be assured that Defra take our responsibility to protect the marine environment very seriously. Whilst no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required for this project as it was not considered to be a relevant project under the EIA Directive a comprehensive Environmental Stewardship (ES), method of works and monitoring program was produced prior to any licence being issued. A licence was only issued once the Regulators were content that the risk to the marine environment from the confined disposal was minimal.

I appreciate that you have concerns over this project but can I can also confirm that following concerns raised at the meeting with the Regulator held in May 2006, the Port instigated Tier 2 monitoring which was required by their licence and as a result of this more intensive monitoring, the Port placed a further 95,000 cu m of clean river silt followed by some 57,000 cu m of clean sand on the trial site in June/July 2006 . This was all placed over the centre of the trial disposal site using a conventional trailer suction hopper dredger and opening the multiple hopper doors to get a good column of sand in the water.

Monitoring during the second week of July showed that 64,000 cu m of this new capping material had been retained in the optimum capping area giving a cap thickness at the centre of the cap of 1.5 m with an average thickness of 0.65 m over the entire area. The results of the surveys carried out following the augmentation of the cap are currently being compiled and will be sent to you once they are complete.

Following completion and assessment of this further information a stakeholder meeting will be held in early October to which you will of course be invited to.

I hope you find this letter helpful and informative in addressing the concerns that you have raised.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

Yours sincerely

Alexis Tregenza
Customer Contact Unit