MARINE CONSENTS & ENVIRONMENT UNIT
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Bob Latimer
Shell Hill
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Whitburn
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SR6 7NT

Date: 12 April 2006

Dear Bob

FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT 1985 – PORT OF TYNE CAPPING TRIAL.

Thank you for your emails of 27 & 31 March regarding the Port of Tyne Capping Trial. I note your concerns and acknowledge your request under the Freedom of Information Act for copies of all correspondence, emails, memos, reports and drafts from all agencies in relation to the trial. I also acknowledge your request under the Freedom of Information Act for details of the contaminates contained in the sediments deposited at the disposal site.

Much of the information you have requested falls within the scope of the Deposits in the Sea (Public Register of Information) Regulations 1996 instead of the Freedom of Information and Access to Environmental Information Regulations. Under the Public Register Regulations you welcome to come and inspect the files here at Whitehall Place and decide which papers you would like copies of. If you wish to come and view the files you can also identify any documents that do not fall under the FEPA Public Register Regulations (post issue documents not related to variations of the licence or resulting from conditions of that licence) that you would like copies of.

As to your request for details of the contaminates contained in the sediments deposited at the disposal site I am seeking this information from my marine scientists at Cefas and will forward this on to you shortly.

On the specific concerns you have raised I can assure you that the licence issued to the Port of Tyne had a specific condition requiring that all reasonable precautions were taken to prevent the disposal of man made debris to sea. We have no evidence to suggest that the rags being trawled up originate from the disposal site nor do we have any evidence that there has been any reduction in fish populations. As to possible short dumping we have not been advised of any instances of short dumping but if we were we would ensure that our colleagues at the Marine Fisheries Agency investigate with a view to prosecution.

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As to the case of the campaign which stopped the designation of new marine disposal sites within Long Island Sound USA obviously we can not comment. What we can say is that if we received any request for a new disposal site it would not be designated until a full environmental impact assessment EIA had been carried out.

Yours sincerely

Andy Dixon

Andy Dixon

Marine Consent and Environment Unit