To members of the IFCA committee

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Apologies that we cannot attend the meeting.

From reading the various replies to the consultation, we have filled out the consultations up until now and have put our points across. My two sons and myself, if was successful to get a suction license would have to make a heavy investment, in a new boat, I have put in the last consultation a bit about our background, and we would need a 28 year license for our investment and long term work security for my sons. In one of your replies, we did see that if the TAC dropped, they wanted the new license revoked, if we had investment in the industry that would obviously bankrupt us straight away if this was to happen, so that could not be an option for you to accept.

We understand that the existing licenses will probably be re issued, but its ironic how half the fleet are flag of convenience, foreign owned vessels, I had this with the fishing quotas that fell into the hands of the Dutch and quota traders, that pushed me out of the white fish fishing through lack of quota and bad management after 40 years. Its DEFRA policy now I understand, talking to DEFRA in London, that they want to encourage new entrants to come into fishing, this is a golden opportunity now for my 2 sons with my 8 years knowledge of the local cockle fishing to gain entry to a well managed fishery. But, we would have to be treated the same as the existing fleet, because of the massive financial investment we would have to commit to going forward.

What I will say, without going on too much, is some of these license holders who obviously doesn't want any change, are hypocrites as they've been to court several times for cockle fishing offences over the years, so when they go on about there TACs have they really been honest in the past? This is another debate, when all they want is a closed industry to suit there own ends. My family has fished in this Thames estuary since the 1800s, so were not actually new to the job, back door politics got rid of us.

We hope you understand our position.

Best regards,

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