

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

8th January 2021

Dear Conscient,

RE: BOMB DISPOSAL AND OUR MARINE LIFE.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the impact of unexploded war bombs on our marine life; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I agree we should do all we can to protect the welfare of our marine life, especially the whale, and from my conversations with ministerial colleagues I know they feel the same.

I recognise the significant impact underwater noise from ordnance clearance and other activities can have on vulnerable marine species. I am therefore pleased that Ministers are working closely with the Marine Management Organisation, nature conservation bodies and marine industries to reduce underwater noise, but it is important that they ensure any clearance method used is both safe and effective.

I am aware that the underwater noise impact of using low order deflagration techniques for unexploded ordnance detonations is currently being researched. Two phases of a Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy funded project to characterise and contrast the acoustic fields generated by unexploded ordnance clearance using high order detonation and using low-order deflagration, have been completed. I understand that a third phase has now been initiated to allow further assessment of the clearance options. A potential fourth phase of the work involving offshore field work is also being actively explored in which comparative noise measurements would be made during actual unexploded ordnance clearance campaigns using both deflagration and high order detonations.

The outcomes from the third and fourth phases will allow an informed discussion to take place; however, it will be for the regulatory authorities and the statutory nature conservation bodies to consider the best available scientific evidence when providing advice on these matters. I must inform you, however, that the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs does not expect to issue formal guidance on the use of low-order deflagration techniques until this research has been completed.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE