

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th January 2021

New Complaint,

RE: SUPERTRAWLERS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding sustainable fishing in British waters and the access of large trawling vessels to our waters.

I share your concern about the protection and health of British waters and I am fully aware of the impact that supertrawlers have on marine life. Our waters are a precious natural resource and they must be managed carefully. The future of the communities that earn their livelihoods from the sea and the biodiversity of the ocean depends on a balanced and considered approach to fisheries management.

The UK has 357 'Marine Protected Areas' covering a quarter of the country's waters, but the EU's Common Fisheries Policy has restricted our ability to impose more stringent protections on our seas. I am pleased that now our future relationship with the EU has been agreed, the UK will be able to introduce stronger measures so that we can manage our waters as we see fit.

The Fisheries Act will help to protect our marine resources and develop plans to restore our fish stocks back to more sustainable levels. This builds on a manifesto commitment which promised to introduce a legal commitment to fish sustainably as we become an independent coastal state once again.

I understand that the access of supertrawlers to UK waters is of significant concern to local fishing communities and to those working to protect our seas. I am pleased that the *Fisheries Act* has provided the Government with powers to licence foreign vessels in UK waters. This means that any vessel granted access to our waters will also be required to abide by UK rules, including on sustainability, and I fully support this approach. I am pleased that we are once again in control of how we protect our waters.

I understand that temporary licences have been granted to a handful of vessels to allow them to continue fishing in UK waters beyond the 31st December 2020, and they are valid until the 21st January 2021. I am pleased that the Prime Minister recently highlighted the freedom available to now manage our own fisheries, including ending the practice of pulse fishing and the potential to regulate the activity of large vessels sometimes referred to as supertrawlers. I look forward to hearing more details on this shortly, and in the meantime, will ensure my ministerial colleagues are aware of your strong feelings on this issue.

I know that commercial fishing vessels must demonstrate a genuine link with the UK economy to fish our waters, which is important to ensure local communities benefit from the fishing activities of UK-registered vessels. I am pleased that the Department for



Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has consulted on options for strengthening this link. This consultation outlined plans to increase the landing requirements from 50 percent to 70 percent for quota catch caught by English registered vessels landing more than 2 tonnes per annum. I look forward to reading the Minister's response to this consultation which is due shortly.

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**