

30th July 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about 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 super trawlers 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 currently restricts our ability to impose more stringent protections on our seas. After the end of the transition period, however, the UK will be able to introduce stronger measures so that we can manage our waters as we see fit.

The Fisheries Bill currently going through Parliament will help to protect our marine resources and develop plans to restore our fish stock 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 super trawlers to UK waters is of significant concern to local fishing communities and to those working to protect our seas. That is why I am glad that the Fisheries Bill will provide the Government with powers to licence foreign vessels in UK waters. Foreign vessels will have no automatic right of access to our waters in the future. 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. We will once again be in control of how we protect our waters.

I am confident that the Government is listening to concerns and taking action in the best interests of the UK.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP