

Stephen Byers MP
House of Commons
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Dear Mr Byers,

Please find enclosed with this letter a cheque for £100. We have had a whip round at Sustain and would like to offer this to you as a retainer to use your influence with the secretary of state for the environment Hilary Benn MP to introduce a legal standard for seafood bought by the public sector, and hope that this amount of money is sufficient to purchase fifteen minutes of your time to discuss this issue.

The international threat to seafood, particularly some fish species, is well-documented. There is consensus that fish stocks need careful management and a recognition that fisheries that are over-exploited can collapse suddenly and with irreversible damage.

Data from the United Nations Fisheries and Aquaculture Department paints a very bleak picture for the state of our oceans. On a global scale, it estimates that more than half of global fisheries are now at risk of decline and that a maximum sustainable limit for global capture has been reached (UN FAO, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department 2008, 'The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture').

The public sector is a big consumer of seafood, but it is not an ethical consumer of seafood. At the present time, public sector organisations are not required to meet ANY legal standard for the seafood that it buys. The government can address this urgent situation, and act to support the sustainability of global fish stocks and species, by making it a legal requirement that public bodies in the UK can only buy seafood that is proven to be sustainable.

By doing this, the government would achieve three very important things:

1. It would ensure that government spends public money on fish in a responsible way, which acts to solve environmental problems rather than to cause them.
2. By only buying sustainable seafood, the public sector would lead by example and serve to educate through best practice.
3. The sheer purchasing power of government has the capacity to drive the market for sustainable seafood, catalyzing advances in the British seafood industry.

Please do let me know your availability to discuss this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Jackson'.

Alex Jackson
Campaign coordinator, Good Food for Our Money campaign, alex@sustainweb.org

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