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Revised Measures for Recreational Catches of Sea Bass in 2018

Dear Mr Eustice

We are grateful that, at the December 2017 Fishing Opportunities Council meeting, you secured the EU Commission's agreement that it would, following the ICES sea bass benchmarking, reconsider allowing landings of sea bass in recreational fisheries in 2018. Your intervention has been vindicated by the revised ICES scientific advice for sea bass which reduced the estimated impact of recreational fishing on the stock from 1,627t down to 212t.

Sea anglers are deeply frustrated at the time it took for ICES to provide revised advice and that the EU Commission did not immediately review the situation in July. It has been apparent since 29 June that the zero-bag limit was unnecessarily restrictive, yet anglers are still unable to retain a bass for the table. Commercial fishermen have been able to land and sell bass since January this year, adding to the sense of unfairness.

We understand that the European Commission is now finally preparing a proposal for sea bass recreational fisheries in 2018 and expects to adopt this proposal in September, following which it will be put to Council for consideration.

Once the Commission has adopted the proposal. Would you please do whatever you can to ensure that the proposal is considered by the Council at the earliest opportunity?

We anticipate the Commission's proposal will recommend the reintroduction of a sea bass bag limit for recreational fisheries. We should be most grateful if you would support a two-fish bag limit, in recognition of: the few remaining months in 2018; the ICES advice that Blim is attainable in 2020; and the Commission allocating 600t of mortality to recreational fisheries in 2018.

Thank you very much for your continuing support of recreational bass angling.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lloyd