

Marine Environment Division

Area 2C, Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR



Website www.defra.gov.uk

3rd April 2008

Dear Consultee,

Draft Marine Bill

I am writing to invite views on the draft Marine Bill package published on 3 April and now entering a period of both Parliamentary pre-legislative scrutiny and public consultation (the latter closes on 26 June 2008).

The package of proposals published today sets out in legislation the proposals which were widely supported last year in "A Sea Change – the Marine Bill White Paper". The draft Bill helps fulfil the Government's 2005 election manifesto commitment to introduce a new framework for the seas based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs.

We have developed the proposals set out in the draft Bill for a new, world-leading marine planning system for the sustainable management, use and protection of the marine environment. The Bill will enable more strategic decisions to be made about what and where activities can take place in the marine environment, including where we wish to have specific areas for conservation purposes. It also simplifies the system for managing our use of natural resources and controlling activities that impact upon them, and introduces measures that are critical for the management and conservation of migratory and freshwater fisheries. The draft Bill also establishes a delivery body to allow the UK Government to manage all these activities as effectively as possible.

We are also taking this opportunity to bring forward proposals for greater access to the English coast. The coast is an important landscape which attracts over 70 million trips each year. The Marine Bill will build on existing access legislation to create a route around the coast of England.

All of the measures contained in the draft Marine Bill have been subject to extensive public consultation and revision in the light of responses received. We have decided not to set out any specific consultation questions on the package, but would welcome views on whether the proposals we have developed for the draft Bill – and which are explained in the policy paper – will deliver the outcomes we wish to see.

The policy paper, which forms the consultation paper, and other documents in the draft Bill package can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill/>.



Printed copies of the policy paper, are available from the Marine Bill Team at the address below.

Please send responses to either:

Marine Bill Team
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Area 2C
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London, SW1P 3JR

Or email: MarineBillTeam@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Printed copies of the priced Command Paper which comprises the total draft marine bill package are available from TSO. Online – www.tsoshop.co.uk, or mail, telephone, fax & e-mail

TSO, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN
Telephone orders – 0870 600 5522
Fax orders : 0870 600 5533
Textphone 0870 240 3701

The deadline for responses is 26 June 2008.

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of responses we receive may be made publicly available through the Defra Information Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses.

If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your email system will not be treated as such a request. You should be aware that there are circumstances in which Defra will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

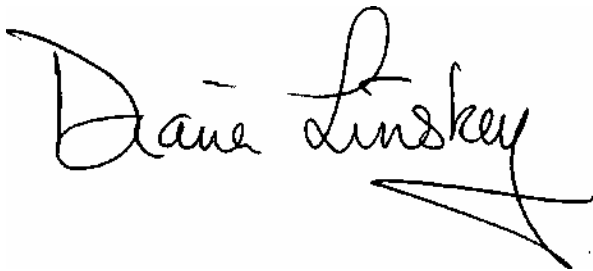
The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or email requests (tel: 020 7238 6575, email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Wherever possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

This consultation has been prepared in line with the Government code of practice which is available from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform at <http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/>.

Comments or complaints about the consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issue which is the subject of consultation) should be addressed to:

Marjorie Addo
Defra's Consultation Co-ordinator
Area 7C
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London, SW1P 3JR
Email: consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Linskey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'D' and a long, sweeping underline.

Diana Linskey
Marine Environment including the Marine Bill
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs