

## Fisheries Bill: Lords consideration of Commons amendments: Briefing for Peers on amendments 1A, 1B and 14B

November 2020

### Greener UK priorities

The Fisheries Bill is a once in a generation opportunity for the UK government and devolved administrations to achieve real and lasting change on our waters as we leave the EU and become an independent coastal state. Change is urgently needed to restore our fish stocks to healthy levels and help recover ocean health. This is also needed to help tackle climate change and achieve the goals in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the recently signed Leaders' Pledge for Nature<sup>1</sup> – both of which call for an end to unsustainable fishing practices.

Greener UK therefore supports **amendments 1A, 1B and 14B**, proposed by Lord Randall of Uxbridge and Lord Teverson, which would make a significant and positive change to how we approach future fisheries management. The first amendment would help to ensure fisheries management decisions are environmentally sustainable while the second provides for the roll out of Remote Electronic Monitoring systems with cameras (REM) on all boats over 10 metres fishing in English waters. These adjustments to the Fisheries Bill could make good on the government's environmental commitments and deliver the change that is urgently needed. **We therefore urge Peers to vote in support of these amendments and improve the bill so that it can deliver on the government's ambitions to have world leading environmental laws.**

### Improving effectiveness of the sustainability objective – Amendment 1A & 1B

Despite international commitments to end overfishing by 2020, only 58-68% of UK fish stocks, for which we have data, are currently fished at sustainable levels. **Amendment 1A** would help ensure that the Fisheries Bill prioritises environmental sustainability, both in the short and long term, which will be crucial to prevent overfishing and support a sustainable fishing sector. This amendment would also help to ensure that:

- UK fishing policy better aligns with current best practice internationally. Similar, if not more ambitious commitments on environmental sustainability are included in other international fisheries management legislation, for example in the USA<sup>2</sup> and South Australia;<sup>3</sup>
- Short term economic factors will no longer be prioritised over the need for our fisheries to be managed in an environmentally sustainable way;
- Urgent action is taken to recover depleted fish stocks.<sup>4</sup> Thriving stocks would result in a more resilient and productive marine ecosystem and lead to increased long-term catches, industry profits and benefits for coastal communities.<sup>5</sup> North Sea plaice is an

example of a stock which is thriving as a result of reduced fishing pressure, in line with scientific advice.<sup>6</sup>

Greener UK also supports **amendment 1B**, which requires the government to provide an explanation of how the fisheries policy authorities propose to meet the sustainability objective. We encourage Peers to support this amendment at the vote.

### **A commitment (for English administrations) to introduce Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) with cameras – Amendment (14B)**

**Amendment 14B** seeks to roll out REM with cameras on all vessels over 10 metres fishing in English waters. REM can bring many benefits to governments, industry and the marine environment and has the potential to transform UK fishing. These include:

- Providing the robust and verifiable data needed to support well managed, accountable and sustainable fisheries. Trials of REM on UK vessels have already illustrated the benefits of this technology as an invaluable monitoring tool.<sup>7</sup>
- Better alignment with international best practices in fisheries management. Full REM programmes are already implemented with great success in the USA, Canada and Australia.<sup>8</sup> There should be no hesitation in this being made a requirement for vessels over 10 metres fishing in English waters and would be a first step towards the UK being on par with global leaders in fisheries management.
- Providing assurances to seafood supply chains about the sustainability and legality of fishing in English waters – a much needed response to the increasing consumer interest in the sustainability of their choices.

In summary, Greener UK believes that the Fisheries Bill must be amended if the government is to deliver its ambition of having world leading environmental laws and world leading fisheries management. This could be achieved by accepting **amendments 1A, 1B and 14B**. As the UK's first major piece of domestic fisheries policy in over 40 years, this is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the way we manage our fisheries for the better.

For more information, please contact:

Alice Watson, public affairs assistant, Marine Conservation Society

E: [alice.watson@mcsuk.org](mailto:alice.watson@mcsuk.org)

T: 07847 830738

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Leaders' Pledge for Nature, 2020 [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 2017 [here](#)

<sup>3</sup> South Australia Fisheries Management Act, 2007 [here](#)

<sup>4</sup> Those below their lower biomass limit including West of Scotland cod and whiting, Irish Sea whiting, North Sea cod, Celtic Sea cod and herring stocks in the Celtic Sea, southern Irish Sea and West of Scotland

<sup>5</sup> For example, see NEF, Jobs lost at sea, 2012 [here](#) and Oceana, More food, more jobs and more money in the UK: Oceana's recipe for fish recovery, 2018 [here](#)

<sup>6</sup> Greener UK, The case for sustainable fishing limits, 2018 [here](#)

<sup>7</sup> WWF, Electronic monitoring in fisheries management, 2015 [here](#)

<sup>8</sup> Electronic monitoring in fisheries: Lessons from global experiences and future opportunities, 2019 [here](#).

**Greener UK is a coalition of 13 major environmental organisations united in the belief that leaving the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance the UK's environment.**

**Greener UK is working in partnership with the New Economics Foundation and Oceana.**

**Working in partnership with:**



## GREENER UK

---

