Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Resource Efficiency Division

Department of
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe
Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: DAERA/24-213

[redacted]

Water Management Unit
NIEA
17 Antrim Road
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

Email: waterinfo@daera-ni.gov.uk

21/05/2024

Dear [redacted]

[Environmental Information Regulations 2004]

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 26/04/2024 which sought the following information:

"I would like to know whether there are any estimates available of the relative importance of the sources of phosphorus which enter the catchment of Lough Neagh"

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information you requested. A breakdown of the nutrient load entering Lough Neagh from the main catchments is available. See attached Annex 1.

Unfortunately, currently there is no available holistic model breaking down the source of nutrients within each catchment. Work towards refining nutrient source apportionment is ongoing in collaboration with DAERA. The Horizon Europe research project NEW Harmonica started in 2022 and has the Lough Neagh

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catchment (LNC) as one of the four NW European study areas (https://newharmonica.eu/). That ongoing project utilises Source Load Apportionment Model (SLAM) simulations for estimating total Phosphorus (TP) loads from multiple sources and includes the cross-border Blackwater catchment (approximately 1435 km^2) which flows into Lough Neagh near Dungannon. It does not however, include the remainder of the LNC (approximately 3,015 km^2). New integrated water quality models will be developed which will refine the high-level NI source apportionment estimates published in the RePhoKUs project (agriculture (62%), wastewater discharges (24%), and septic tanks (12%)), with more granular Lough Neagh specific data. These new source apportionment models will be validated by higher resolution water quality monitoring and will ensure that the success of interventions is measured using the best science available.

The following research paper may be of interest; Phosphorus stocks and flows in an intensive livestock dominated food system - PMC (nih.gov).

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department.

If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]