

Public Interest Test – EIR

Reference Number – DAERA/26-328

Requested Information

All environmental information held by DAERA relating to the non-commencement or non-exercise of aquaculture licensing powers in Lough Foyle.

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Due to the volume of containers, records and information detailed in the records we have proposed that the request in its current form is manifestly unreasonable in accordance with regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations.

Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:

- Transparency and accountability – promoting openness about the Department’s activities and decision-making processes.
- Understanding environmental impacts – disclosure may assist the public in understanding how environmental decisions have been made and what considerations have been taken into account.
- Public participation in environmental matters – access to environmental information supports informed public debate and participation.
- Trust in the Department – providing the information may increase confidence in the Department that it operates in an open and accountable manner.

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- Disproportionate burden on resources – due the scale and breadth of the request it would require significant diversion of staff time and resources to locate, retrieve, review and redact the information.
- Impact on service delivery – complying with the request would place an unreasonable strain on the Department, potentially delaying upcoming projects and industry engagement.
- Inefficient use of public funds – the level of effort required would represent a poor use of limited public resources, particularly where the scope of the request is very wide.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test and a review of the estimated time and cost of the request, the Department has decided to withhold the requested information on the grounds that the request is manifestly unreasonable due to the volume of information requested.

Aquaculture Policy Branch