

Environment Protection Authority

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

23 March 2021

Hon Meg Webb MLC
Inquiry Chair
Sessional Committee GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION A
HOBART TAS 7000

Email: jenny.mannering@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Webb

SUB-COMMITTEE – FIN FISH FARMING IN TASMANIA INQUIRY

Thank you for your letter of 17 March requesting further clarification in relation to reporting of mortality incidents to the EPA and expectations outlined in Marine Farming Development Plans (MFDP) regarding the management of mass mortality events. My responses are outlined against your questions below. Please note that requirements for reporting under Management controls in MFDPs often include provision for notification to both the Director, EPA and Secretary, DPIPW. The scope of my responses provided below are therefore limited to the role of the EPA in these matters.

I. What level of mortality needs to be reported to the EPA?

Marine Fin Fish Farms

Environmental Licences (EL) require:

- i. the licence holder must report any suspected or known incidents of disease or mortality affecting more than 0.25% of fish per day for three consecutive days in any individual cage. These reports are to be provided to the Director, EPA (by e-mail to SalmonRegulation@epa.tas.gov.au) and the DPIPW-assigned fish veterinarian or an inspector under the Animal Health Act 1995;
- ii. Monthly mortality weight must be reported (i.e. electronic format) on a quarterly basis to the Marine Farming Branch of DPIPW (by e-mail to mafarming.environment@dpiw.tas.gov.au). These records must be submitted to DPIPW within fourteen days of the end of each quarter and must be kept by the EL holder for a period of five years.*

** There is a level of overlap currently in place whereby the EL requires reporting of parameters, including monthly mortality weight, to the Marine Farming Branch which undertakes quality assurance checks on data before providing to EPA. This arrangement will be modified with issue of new ELs and Environmental Standard.*

Inland Fin Fish Farms

Environmental Licences require:

- i. The licence holder must immediately notify the Director, EPA of any significant fish or ova mortality event.

2. Is there consistent expectation, condition or requirements included in all Marine Farm Development Plans to deal with mass mortality events and to outline mass mortality reporting requirements?

All Marine Farming Development Plans include management conditions related to controls on waste, including mortalities arising from production, and disease controls outlined in 1 and 2 below. These controls are generally consistent between all plans where salmonid farming currently exists. An exception is the *Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage Marine Farming Development Plan October 1998* where prescribed disposal of waste relates to disposal so as not to affect the marine environment. There is no prescription for removal of mortalities as per point 2 below.

1. Controls on Waste

These prescribe:

- i. Waste from production, including mortalities, must be disposed of in accordance with relevant Acts or regulations and in a manner that the Secretary is satisfied will not cause an unacceptable effect on the ecology of the marine environment or nearby shoreline.
- ii. All mortalities arising in connection form marine farming operations must be disposed of at a site that has the necessary approvals to receive the material.

2. Disease Controls

These prescribe:

- i. Lessees must remove dead fish from cages and report mortalities in accordance with any direction from the Secretary or the Director, EPA.

If you have any queries regarding this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me using the contact details provided at the head of this correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Wes Ford

DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY