



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

Head of Counter Pollution and Salvage
Maritime & Coastguard Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton

Don Staniford
salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com

Website: www.dft.gov.uk/mca/

Your References:

- A. FOI re. Portree Fish Feed Barge & Salvage - email dated 31 Aug 22
- B. Re: Portree Fish Feed Barge - FOI 4050 - email dated 04 Nov 22
- C. Letter to Scottish Ministers re. "explosive" feed barge off Portree - email dated 18 Nov 22

Our References:

- A. MCA Reply - Portree Fish Feed Barge - FOI 4050 - dated 02 Nov 22
- B. Your email - Re: Portree Fish Feed Barge - FOI 4050 - dated 04 Nov 22
- C. Your email - Re: Portree Fish Feed Barge - FOI 4050 - dated 08 Nov 22
- D. FOI ID - 4103 - 2nd FOI Request - dated 08 Nov 22 (10:24)

6 December 2022

Freedom of Information Act Request – ID 4103 - Portree Fish Feed Barge

Dear Mr Staniford

Thank you for your emails of 4 Nov 2022 and 8 November 2022 (10:24).

Your email of 4 November 2022 effectively requested a review of the MCA's response to a previous FOI request, FOI 4050. This review is being undertaken separately within the MCA and a response will be provided when complete.

The requested review will consider your original request for information, which was:

“Could you please provide information on the sinking (in late November 2021) and attempted salvage of the fish feed barge operated by The Scottish Salmon Company (Bakkafrost) off Portree?”

Your 4 November email also noted that:

“Suffice to say that no original documents, emails, letters and other information were disclosed. Only a summary was provided.

Please therefore provide a more detailed FOI reply - including source documents."

Notwithstanding the outcome of the review please find at Enclosure 1 all of the emails held by the MCA on the subject of the Portree Fish Feed Barge incident. The MCA hold no other documentation on the incident.

As noted in our reply on the 2 November 2022 (Our Ref A) the MCA were not the lead authority for this incident:

"The Owners of the barge, Bakkafrøst, continue to lead the recovery operation, with assistance and engagement from all other stakeholders as appropriate."

The MCA, amongst many others stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, environmental regulators local government authorities and commercial salvage/recovery experts were involved to varying degrees. The MCA's role was one of monitoring the operation, not directing it. All of this is covered in your 'Letter to Scottish Ministers' at 'Your Reference C'

In your email of the 8 November 2022 (10:24) you ask:

"Why wasn't a public warning issued on the danger of "explosive" gases spewing from Scottish Salmon's sunken feed barge off Skye?"

and

"Do you have an update on this month's salvage of the salmon feed barge off Portree?"

In response to your first question, with the information provided by Bakkafrøst to the MCA (and other agencies) we were aware of the risks presented by the release of gases, and of the precautionary steps being taken to mitigate the threat to both the marine environment and the public. The MCA did contact Bakkafrøst (nee Scottish Salmon) by email on the 12 August 2022 (19:18) requesting confirmation that, *"If you could attempt to speak to local representatives (fire and authority) to ensure [that] they are in receipt of this information and understand it, that would be most appreciated."* The local footpath adjacent to the site and the potential presence of cruise liners calling at Portree was also raised.

Why a wider public threat notice was not provided until the 16 August is not known, that the risks and threat became more public from the 16 August is accepted as did the development of risk mitigation measures. All of these are detailed in your 'Letter to Scottish Ministers at Your Reference C' and need no additional comment by the MCA.

Moving onto the salvage operation. The lifting operation was due to commence the week commencing 21 November 22. Poor weather in the area delayed this and the final lift was completed this week. The feed barge is secured onboard the crane barge MATADOR 3 and the feed and contaminated water is being unloaded before transit to Strome for additional remediation work. When this last is complete the current intention is for a transit to Ardyne where an assessment will be made to determine the future of the barge. The SOSREP has established a Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) initially around the lifting site and latterly around the MATADOR 3 itself. The TEZ will remain in force throughout the decontamination work and the transit to Strome until all contaminated water / feed has been removed and the risk eliminated.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the FOIA Unit at:

Maritime & Coastguard Agency,
Bay 3/08, Spring Place,

105, Commercial Rd,
SOUTHAMPTON,
Hampshire.
SO15 1EG.

E-mail: InformationAssurance@mcga.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stan Woznicki', written in a cursive style.

Stan Woznicki

Head of Counter Pollution & Salvage