



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COPY

*Speaker's Rooms  
Hobart*

22 August 2012

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write to you at the request of the House Assembly of the Tasmanian Parliament following the passing of a motion on the floor of the House today (22 August 2012). The motion comes from a Notice of Motion moved by Mr Kim Booth MHA, and subsequently amended on the floor of the House by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, the Hon Bryan Green. You may wish to consult the Hansard of the House of Assembly for further details of the debate.

By way of background, the motion carried relates to the possible introduction of the vessel *MV Margiris* into the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery. You will be aware that this vessel has been the cause of a significant amount of concern regarding the possible impacts of a very large trawler into the fishery. The Tasmanian Parliament acknowledges the fishery is managed by the Commonwealth, but that its management can impact on Tasmanian fisheries, and hence our direct interest in the matter.

The issue has seen a number of public rallies, numerous letters to the Editors of local papers and correspondence to Members of Parliament of all sides of politics.

I might observe that several members explicitly pointed to the importance of appropriate science on this issue, rather than casting negative aspersions on any published information, I would suggest that the House does wish to satisfy itself that all the issues in relation to the fishery have been fully considered – including the introduction of a single large vessel.

In relation to the science involved, the Minister also tabled a report titled *The Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery: General background to the scientific issues*. Several speakers noted the high reputation of the authors involved.

I might also observe that one of the key issues raised by speakers was the possibility of localised depletion. Again, the House noted that Minister Green has previously written to you on this issue. In part 2 of the Motion, the Parliament is seeking to be 'satisfied that the vessel and proposed harvest strategy will not adversely impact on the recreational fishery'. Again, I might observe that the issue here is not so much competition for the same target species (i.e. jack mackerel and redbait), but rather any potential ecosystem impacts on key predator species such as southern bluefin tuna targeted by the recreational sector.

I would also note part 3 of the motion that recognises the 'need for a balanced approach between the needs of a sustainable commercial fishing industry, access for recreational fishers and appropriate marine conservation outcomes'.

The motion passed today reads as follows:

**1054 Mr Booth to move – that the House: --**

(1) Notes that:

- a) *the growing community concern and disquiet over the potential arrival of the super trawler, FV Margiris, to operate in Australian waters to fish the small pelagic fishery;*
- b) *the questions raised regarding the potential impact of the 18,000 tonnes per annum quota on local fisheries;*
- c) *this is a matter for Federal authorities who are responsible for access to ports, fishing in Commonwealth waters and the setting of quota in those waters;*
- d) *that the Tasmanian local recreational and commercial fishing communities remain strongly opposed to the FV Margiris operation and have held large protest rallies around the state to stress their concerns; and*
- e) *both the Tasmanian Greens and the Tasmanian Liberal parties have publicly voiced their respective opposition to this proposed super trawler, with the shared concern that the federal Labor Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, has failed to demonstrate that this commercial fishery activity will be sustainable and will not cause localised depletion off Tasmania.*

(2) *Requests the Speaker to write to Senator Ludwig, to advise him that the House will not support the FV Margiris operation in Australian waters and waters around Tasmania until the Parliament can be satisfied that the vessel and proposed harvest strategy will not adversely impact on the recreational fishery.*

(3) *The House recognises the need for a balanced approach between the needs of a sustainable commercial fishing industry, access for recreational fishers and appropriate marine conservation outcomes.*

On behalf of the House of Assembly, I would ask for further information that would assist the House in relation to the issues raised and possibly satisfying itself as to those issues.

Yours sincerely



The Honourable Michael Polley  
Speaker