

To: Head of Delegation

Representing NAPA, the unified voice of the marketplace for sustainable seafood, I am writing to you today for two reasons: to underscore the alarm within the supply chain at Norway's decision to set a unilateral quota for Northeast Atlantic mackerel and to highlight a new, three-year programme of activity developed by NAPA to drive forwards sustainability in Northeast Atlantic pelagic fisheries.

What is NAPA?

Created to advocate for long-term, sustainable management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic fisheries, NAPA is sector-wide, multi-stakeholder, global and non-competitive. As a collective of businesses with a major share of Northeast Atlantic pelagic purchasing, NAPA is directly invested in the responsible, science-driven management of these stocks. Specifically, we focus on Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Atlanto-Scandian herring, and blue whiting.

Our members are household-name retailers, food service and supply chain businesses with the shared aim of sourcing sustainable and certified seafood in order to supply a growing demand for eco-labelled fish products. To achieve this, NAPA is seeking an agreement on total allowable catches for Northeast Atlantic pelagic fisheries in line with scientific advice, and for a long-term, science-based management agreement.

NAPA currently has nearly 50 members from across Europe and is growing constantly – more and more businesses are coming on board to demand responsible, sustainable seafood products for their consumers.

Unilateral quota-setting is unacceptable

We are alarmed by the decision of the Norwegian government to set a unilateral quota for Northeast Atlantic mackerel. Increasing the Norwegian national catch of mackerel by 106,456 tonnes up to 298,299 tonnes is a decision that directly challenges cooperative and sustainable management of this crucial stock.

This action undermines efforts to reach an agreement between all parties to achieve long-term sustainability of the stock and will lead to other Coastal States seeking reciprocal increases in their quotas – we are seeing the tragedy of the commons played out in real-time.

This has major implications for the supply chain who have made public commitments to source sustainable seafood. The inability of the Coastal States to follow the scientific advice and reach agreement on quotas has already resulted in the loss of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for mackerel (and Atlanto-Scandian herring, and blue whiting).

The mackerel fishery is data-rich, has no biological concerns and is well-regulated. The complexity of managing this stock – and the other stocks covered by NAPA's remit – is purely political.

Whilst we embrace our commitments to responsible and ethical sourcing of products for our consumers, it is remarkable that we are in a position where supply chain businesses need to work to drive forwards science-based management of common resources. This is the responsibility of the Coastal States governments and needs to be addressed urgently.

Responsible decision-making is key for responsibly managed fisheries. Annual horse-trading negotiations can no longer be tolerated.

The NAPA 'policy FIP'

We are soon to be publicly launching a new vehicle to build momentum across 2021-2024 towards sustainable management of Northeast Atlantic pelagic stocks. The NAPA 'policy FIP' is a new type of fishery improvement project that is advocacy-based, recognising that the barriers to sustainable

management of Northeast Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring are political. Unlike other FIPs, where better knowledge of stocks, ecosystems, or fishery practices are required, these pelagic fisheries are amongst the best-researched and understood in the world: yet Coastal States decision-makers stand in the way of securing a sustainable future – even with the evidence and long-term management strategies to hand.

The tools and roadmap to achieve long-term sustainability in these fisheries are all at hand - we need Coastal States' decision-makers to grasp them.

In addition to the policy FIP, covering the two stocks mentioned above, NAPA will also be driving forward a three-year MarinTrust 'Improver Programme', based on the same principles, with the objective of achieving sustainable management of blue whiting.¹

We will be keeping Coastal States apprised of our activity and engaging regularly to advocate for cooperative decision-making and long-term, sustainable management of these commercially vital stocks. I would be delighted to talk you through the policy FIP and MarinTrust IP process in more detail – my contact details are provided below.

The clock is ticking: we are on a three-year countdown to securing the necessary compromises for sustainability in the Northeast Atlantic. The supply chain wants to see change by 2024 and may individually review purchasing decisions if this can't be achieved.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME AND SIGNATURE]

¹ The MarinTrust Standard has been developed as a credible, robust tool that enables producers of raw materials in the fishmeal and fish oil industry to demonstrate responsible practice. It was formerly known as the IFFO RS Standard.