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Safeguarding Coastal Waters

Press release from SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** has today (Tuesday) welcomed a vote in the European Parliament which will ensure that Europe's fishing nations retain control of their coastal waters.

The unanimous vote in the parliament's fisheries committee was on a legislative report drafted by Mr Hudghton seeking to renew the current control regime within 12 miles of each EU state.

At present resources within each 12-mile coastal zone are the responsibility of each fishing nation. The current regulations are due to expire on 31st December of this year however - and that could potentially open up all coastal waters to vessels from across Europe.

Mr Hudghton was nominated by the fisheries committee to steer emergency legislation through the parliament to prevent this from happening.

Commenting after the vote, Mr Hudghton said:

"Europe's inshore waters are of huge importance to coastal communities and it is vital that these communities are protected.

"There has been a very real threat that these water would be opened up for a free-for-all, and I am grateful that MEPs from across Europe have voted to prevent this from happening.

"The European Commission have themselves acknowledged that national control of coastal waters has been one of the few successes of the current CFP regime. Lessons should be learned from this and, as negotiations for CFP reform continue, we should look at more ways to return control to the fishing nations.

"The Scottish government has actively lobbied within the Council of Ministers for the 12-mile zones to be retained and I have been able to work in parallel with them in the parliament.

"The overwhelming support for my report from parliamentary colleagues shows that there is real support for decision making powers being made close to home."

Notes for editors

- * Coastal waters within 12 nautical miles of each EU member state have been under national control since the first CFP legislation was adopted in 1983.
- * This member state control has however always been granted for 10-year periods at a time and is renewed by each reform of the CFP. The current legislation is due to expire on 31st December 2012.
- * Delays in the ongoing CFP reform mean that the new fisheries policy will not be in place by the end of the year. This would mean that the current 12-mile zone would lapse, and so the Commission has had to bring forward emergency legislation.
- * In the Commission's Green Paper on CFP reform, they acknowledged that "the current CFP has not worked well" but stated that the coastal zone regime "has generally worked well and could even be stepped up".
- * Mr Hudghton's report was adopted unanimously. The full parliament is expected to formally adopt the report on 21st November.

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