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Unanimous backing for 12 mile fishing limit

Press release by SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** has welcomed the European Parliament's unanimous backing today (Thursday) for legislation renewing the twelve mile limit for fishing in coastal waters.

In a rare display of political harmony, MEPs voted with total unanimity in favour of the legislation, 658 votes in favour, with no abstentions or votes against.

The urgent legislation was presented to the European Parliament by the SNP MEP, who as 'rapporteur' was responsible for steering the law through parliament. Current legislation enshrining the twelve mile limit had been due to expire at the end of this year.

The legislation means that EU members will retain control of fisheries within their national waters. There have been several recent confrontations in EU waters even when boats have been fishing quite legally outside the twelve mile limit. This has made renewing the legislation all the more urgent.

Speaking after the vote, Mr Hudghton contrasted the success of local control of fisheries in national waters with the failed, Brussels-controlled Common Fisheries Policy. He called for lessons to be learned in the current process of reforming the CFP, and for real decentralisation to take place.

Mr Hudghton said:

"The twelve mile limit and local control of fisheries has worked successfully for almost forty years. Contrast that with the disastrous Common Fisheries Policy, derided by fishermen, consumers, environmentalists, and now even the European Commission, as a failure.

"Centralised control of Europe's fisheries by Brussels has had a disastrous impact on fish stocks, on the industry as a whole, and on consumer confidence.

"In their own review of the CFP, the European Commission acknowledged that twelve mile zones had worked well and led to a stable regime. It speaks volumes that the only part of Europe's fisheries policy universally held to have been a success, is the part that's not controlled from Brussels.

"I'm delighted that the European Parliament has unanimously endorsed retaining the twelve mile limit.

"Lessons must be learnt as we move forward with CFP reform. Continued centralisation would spell further disaster for Europe's fishing industry and fish stocks. We must return control of fisheries to Europe's fishing nations."

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