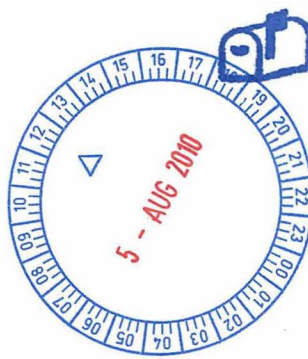
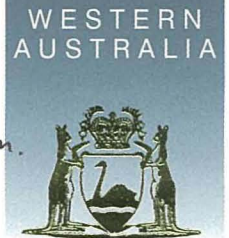


PUBLIC



E-MAILED

05/08/10 to
Amanda Cillingham



MINISTER FOR MINES
AND PETROLEUM;
FISHERIES;
ELECTORAL AFFAIRS;
LEADER OF THE
GOVERNMENT IN THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Our Ref: 26-07193

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

PETITION 67 – OPPOSE THE CLOSURE OF ALL WATERS INCLUDING OYSTER HARBOUR

Dear Mr *Brian* Ellis

Thank you for your letter of 30 June 2010 regarding the concerns raised by commercial fishermen in relation to a petition to close the waters of Oyster Harbour to commercial fishers.

There are twenty nine estuaries on the South Coast, thirteen of which are conditionally open to commercial fishing as part of the South Coast Estuarine Managed Fishery (SCEF). The SCEF is a multi-species fishery with the main fishing methods being gillnetting and haul netting. The management arrangements include spatial and temporal closures, which are designed to manage fishing effort and limit the interaction between commercial and recreational fishers.

In recent years, up to seven of the twenty five commercial operators licensed to fish in the SCEF, have used gillnets in Oyster Harbour in any single year. More than 70% of the catch is taken by three of those operators.

The visible nature of commercial fishing in estuaries brings the activity into the public consciousness and over the years there have been concerns raised in the community about the commercial exploitation of wild fish stocks. The current commercial arrangements have been developed through an extensive period of consultation and review over the period from 1991 to 2005, and included the release of two Fisheries Management Papers for public comment.

At a fishery level, the Department of Fisheries continues to monitor activity, including catch and effort, and considers the SCEF to be sustainable. Catch data indicates current take within the estuaries is at the lower end of the acceptable catch from the fishery.

The present arrangements include a number of resource sharing initiatives to manage interaction between the commercial and recreational sectors, including the spatial and temporal closures.

However, because social, ecological and economic values are continually changing, the Department will maintain an ongoing involvement with the WA Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest (the two peak bodies) to address any issues as they arise.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Norman Moore', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NORMAN MOORE MLC
MINISTER FOR FISHERIES

05 AUG 2010