

Hanna Katrín Friðriksson
Minister of Industries
Iceland
By email: atr@atr.is

16 July 2025

Dear Ms. Friðriksson

Delivering Sustainable Management of North East Atlantic Pelagic Stocks

I am writing to you, on behalf of the North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA), to highlight the ongoing impacts that the continued mismanagement of key North East Atlantic pelagic fisheries is having on seafood supply chains in Iceland and beyond. NAPA is a coalition of over 55 global businesses engaged in fish meal production, aquafeed, salmon farming, seafood processing, distribution, and retail.

Since its establishment in 2020, NAPA has had a single focus of securing the long-term sustainable management of North East Atlantic blue whiting, North East Atlantic mackerel, and Atlanto-Scandian herring. This is in response to the continued failure of regulators and decision makers to reach an agreement on comprehensive sharing arrangements that allocate quota equitably to all coastal states in line with the recommended ICES advice. NAPA has consistently called on Coastal States to set aside their differences and work together to establish and implement a fair and science-based sharing arrangement.

However, the absence of such an agreement is contributing to overfishing, a worrying decline in stock health, and the inability of these fisheries to achieve third-party certification. Certification is not a mere formality - it is essential for fulfilling our ethical business commitments and meeting consumer expectations. UK and European markets demand the highest standards of transparency, welfare and sustainability, which can only be evidenced through certification. Without certification, products that rely on these fisheries, such as canned mackerel and farmed salmon, risk being removed from retail shelves entirely.

NAPA recognises that it has a role to play in helping to deliver a lasting solution. In 2021, NAPA launched two Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs): one for herring and mackerel in April, and another for blue whiting in October. These FIPs were established to coordinate NAPA's advocacy efforts and provide a framework through which businesses could continue to responsibly source products from these three fisheries — provided they support NAPA's objectives. The FIPs are scheduled to conclude in 2026. In the absence of a comprehensive sharing arrangement, NAPA member businesses will need to decide whether continued sourcing from these fisheries is viable. However, many businesses have already begun seeking alternative sources and adapting their supply chains in anticipation of this uncertainty.

The implications of this are significant. Yet NAPA remains concerned that negotiators and policymakers have not fully grasped the scale of the disruption that ongoing inaction will cause, not just for the catching sector, but for all businesses, from fishmeal producers to retailers. Alarming, the issue continues to be viewed through a narrow lens by individual coastal states, focused primarily on how a reduced share of the quota impacts their fish landings, rather than being recognised as a broader threat to supply chain operations and overall stability. This represents a damaging failure by some of the world's most advanced fishing nations to steward resources that underpin thousands of livelihoods.

NAPA acknowledges that resolving these issues will be challenging. Managing large-scale international fisheries is inherently complex, and any successful solution will require meaningful concession and compromise from all parties involved. NAPA was established to contribute constructively to this process and recognises that its own members must also be prepared to make compromises. However, meaningful change will only occur with a fundamental shift in the way negotiations are conducted. NAPA believes that negotiations have largely failed due to the dominance of national self-interest, a tendency toward finger-pointing, and a culture of deflecting responsibility. Too often, proposed initiatives lack credibility and appear designed more to alienate than to unite, driving participants away from the negotiating table rather than toward consensus.

We recognise that, in the absence of certification, fishing will continue — fish will still be caught, landed, and sold, albeit to different markets and often at lower prices. As the representative body for businesses across the supply chain that have the most at stake, NAPA is developing a proposed solution to help break the current stalemate. Our non-partisan status and lack of affiliation with any single coastal state is a strength. It positions NAPA uniquely to serve as a mediator and a potential circuit breaker in these stalled negotiations. Over the next two months, we will engage directly with the catching sector, coastal state negotiators, and NGOs to review and refine our proposal.

Our aim is to present a credible, balanced, and actionable plan to you and other Coastal State Ministers in early autumn. We are looking to you and all Coastal State nations to show leadership and pave the way to thriving North East Atlantic pelagic fisheries that businesses can be proud to source from.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aoife Martin".

Aoife Martin
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