

# Open letter to fishing, seafood and aquaculture industries

To all those who contribute to our fishing, seafood and aquaculture industries,

Thank you.

As a nation we are all undoubtedly going through one of the greatest health challenges of a generation and over the past few weeks the Government has taken some unprecedented steps; instructing people to stay at home, to protect our NHS and save lives.

I know these are challenging times for us all and I would like to pay particular tribute to those of you who are, where possible, continuing to work and help feed our nation – your work is vital.

Coronavirus has affected every part of our economy and this has been felt particularly severely by our fishing, seafood and aquaculture industries – where so much of our great produce is sold around the world.

Sectors right across the economy shoulder a similar burden and the Chancellor has been clear from the start that we will do whatever it takes to support people through such unprecedented times, announcing economy-wide support for business and the self-employed. I will continue to work with industry so fishermen and fisheries businesses understand how to access this support.

On Thursday we announced [further measures to support the seafood sector, with a specific fund to secure the long-term future of the English fishing industry](#), by helping fishing and aquaculture businesses to meet the fixed costs they face, such as insurance, equipment hire and port costs.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) will administer this £10 million fund, contacting eligible registered owners and licence holders directly. A proportion of the fund will go to support initiatives to encourage the public to buy locally-caught fish. Further guidance on the detail of the scheme will be published in the coming days.

To the public, I urge you to support your local fishermen at this time. I am particularly pleased to see home delivery initiatives to connect consumers with local fishmongers, fishermen and merchants. The Marine Management Organisation is working closely with industry to help facilitate these arrangements.

I also want to mention the invaluable work carried out by specialist charities for fishing communities. Details of these organisations are available on the Marine Management Organisation's website.

I am immensely grateful for all those in the fishing, seafood and aquaculture industries who continue to operate in these testing times, or who have

reduced operations to limit the spread of the disease.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Prentis MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for  
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs