

An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications



28 April 2023

Your Ref: S1272 PAC33

Sarah Cremin
Secretariat, Committee of Public Accounts
Houses of the Oireachtas

By email

Re: Correspondence in relation to Inland Fisheries Ireland

Dear Ms. Cremin,

I refer to your letter of 1 March and the Committee of Public Accounts meeting of 12 April at which matters relating to Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) were discussed. I have set out below information in relation to the specific issues raised.

Mr. Tom Barry and Mr. Seamus Neely (“the appointees”) were appointed by Minister Ryan under section 18(5) of the Inland Fisheries Act on 14 February to perform the functions of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) following the removal of the Board on the same date.

The appointees met with the Board Secretary on 20 February and have been engaging intensively since then with the Board Secretary and Executive Team in IFI to move forward the issues that could not be progressed by the previous Board. In addition to this ongoing engagement, the appointees have held three formal Board Meetings on 9 March, 29 March and 19 April. They have also held a meeting of the IFI Audit and Risk Committee on 19 April. They met with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to discuss IFI’s 2021 Accounts on 30 March and have met with IFI’s legal advisers on a number of occasions in March and April. The appointees also met with my Department in March to discuss arrangements for the Governance Review of IFI which the Minister instructed them to undertake as part of the terms of their appointment. The review will commence shortly.

As the Committee is aware, the appointees approved IFI’s 2021 Financial Statements in March and submitted the accounts to the Office of the C&AG. The C&AG wrote to IFI on 4 April to confirm that the audit of the 2021 Financial Statements had been completed. The Department is preparing a submission for the Minister on the 2021 Financial Statements and Annual Report of IFI which he will bring to Government in the normal way and then arrange to have them laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The Department has also been engaging with the Public Appointments Service to expedite the process of appointing a new Board of IFI. The Joint Oireachtas Committee



on the Environment and Climate Action, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Minister for Rural and Community Development are also involved in the nominations and appointment processes. Calls for expressions of interest will be published soon.

I trust the foregoing will be of assistance to the Committee.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Griffin', is centered below the text 'Yours Sincerely,'.

Mark Griffin
Secretary General