Government of Jersey
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Deputy Hilary Jeune
Chair
Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

BY EMAIL

23 October 2026

Dear Chair,

Re: Draft Sea Fisheries (Les Ecréhous) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202- (P.66/2026)

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October 2026 and for outlining the Panel's observations re; the Draft Sea Fisheries (Les Ecréhous) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202- (P.66/2026). I appreciate the Panel highlighting the findings and themes arising from its Review of the Marine Spatial Plan and the relevance of these matters to the Assembly's forthcoming consideration of the proposed Regulations.

I welcome the Panel's continued scrutiny of this important area of policy and the opportunity to provide further clarification on the matters raised. The Government remains committed to the sustainable management of Jersey's marine environment, balancing environmental protection with the needs of those who rely upon and enjoy our coastal and marine resources.

Please find below my responses to the Panel's questions, which are addressed in the order set out in your correspondence.

1. **How does the proposed expansion of the no parlour pot zone at Les Écréhous contribute to the objectives of the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan, particularly its aims of restoring biodiversity and supporting sustainable and profitable fisheries?**

The proposed extension would remove the most efficient type of fishing gear, the parlour pot, from a larger area of shallow reef habitat. This will reduce exploitation pressure on

lobster and crab populations within one of Jersey's most productive offshore reef systems. The proposal specifically targets "productive shallow reef habitat", which is recognised in the MSP as an important marine ecosystem supporting a variety of species.

Healthy shellfish populations contribute to the overall resilience of reef ecosystems. By reducing the capture efficiency within the reef system, the proposal should help maintain more natural population densities and age structures, making the ecosystem better able to withstand pressures such as climate change and environmental disturbance. Ghost fishing impacts are also reduced through this change.

2. **The proposition notes concerns regarding declining lobster stocks. What scientific evidence demonstrates that expanding the protected area will result in a meaningful recovery of lobster populations?**

The proposed expansion of the No Parlour Pot Zone at Les Écréhous will support recovery of lobster stocks by reducing fishing mortality within a highly productive reef habitat, increasing the abundance of mature breeding adults, enhancing egg production and recruitment, and creating a refuge from which lobsters can disperse into surrounding fishing grounds. The measure is expected to strengthen the spawning stock biomass and improve the long-term sustainability and resilience of the fishery. Unpublished data from the equivalent zone at the Minquiers shows healthier populations than in unrestricted areas.

3. **What evidence has been gathered from the existing protected area established under the Sea Fisheries (Les Écréhous) (Jersey) Regulations 2018, and what does that evidence indicate about the effectiveness of the current and proposed restrictions?**

Between 2018 and 2020, potting surveys were carried out at Les Écréhous as part of a PhD assessing the effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas in Jersey (Blampied, 2022). At the beginning of this research, the current, smaller, No Parlour Pot Zone (NPPZ) had been in place for one year (since 2017). The NPPZ was not the focus of this research but some of the potting surveys ended up in the NPPZ and allowed for some observations to be made. One of the key findings from this research was the greater number of under minimum landing size (< 87 mm carapace length) lobsters caught inside the NPPZ compared to all other sites. In the NPPZ, 8.3 undersized lobsters were caught per every 10 pots, compared to just 0.3 lobsters outside the NPPZ. The number of undersized lobsters was also much greater than the sized lobsters. This was observed in all three years of survey work, suggesting that this area may be an important nursery area for lobsters.

The longer established NPPZ at the Minquiers was also researched at the same time and the number of lobsters on the whole were greater than at Les Écréhous. This could suggest the long-term management of the NPPZ has helped support the lobster populations at the Minquiers.

4. **What evidence has been gathered about the existing use of the proposed protected areas for parlour pot fishing?**

During the consultation process for this proposal, fishers who use parlour pots outside of the current NPPZ were engaged. Currently, 5 active commercial vessels use the area which is proposed to become a NPPZ. During this consultation, these fishers were in support of the proposal and have expressed the benefits of this to the department.

5. **How were the proposed boundaries selected, and what evidence supports those particular boundaries rather than a smaller or larger protected area or even the introduction of a no take zone?**

The proposed extension area has been selected because it encompasses highly productive shallow reef habitat that supports important lobster populations, builds upon the existing No Parlour Pot Zone established in 2018, and addresses evidence of declining lobster stocks identified through Marine Resources monitoring. The proposed boundary has also been informed by consultation with commercial fishers through the Lobster Working Group, the Jersey Fishermen's Association and French fishing committees.

6. **The Marine Spatial Plan highlights the importance of protecting nursery and spawning habitats and promoting sustainable fisheries. Were any alternative management measures considered, such as changes to minimum landing sizes, catch controls or seasonal restrictions, and why was spatial protection considered the preferred option?**

The proposed extension of the NPPZ is only one of a suite of management measures brought in for the lobster fishery in recent years. Through recommendations of the lobster working group and in consultation with France and the EU, the minimum landing size increased from 87mm carapace length to 90mm carapace length over three years. In tandem with this, pot limitations have been brought in for non-shellfish commercial licence holders to reduce effort on the stock. Further management measures which include pot reductions for full-shellfish licence holders, maximum landing size and V notching are still being discussed with the lobster working group. At the inception of the NPPZ in 2018 at Les Écréhous, it was initially agreed this area would be expanded in the future once the benefits had been seen by industry. This is government following up on that agreed action to industry.

7. **The proposition states that there are no additional financial or staffing implications. Given the remoteness of Les Écréhous and the range of existing responsibilities undertaken by Marine Resources, how can the Department ensure effective enforcement of the expanded restrictions within current resources?**

Marine Resources will ensure effective enforcement of the expanded No Parlour Pot Zone through a combination of routine patrols, vessel and gear inspections, vessel monitoring technology, intelligence-led compliance activity and cooperation with French fisheries authorities. The area is currently effectively patrolled by the department and benefits from a strong degree of industry led compliance. The proposal originated from discussions with the fishing industry and has support from both Jersey and French fishers. On rare occasions when breaches are found, they are dealt with by Marine Resources as seen by the track record of prosecutions by the team. Of note is a successful prosecution of a French vessel through the magistrates court on 20/10/2026 for breaching the NPPZ. Magistrate's and Youth Court results - Courts.je

8. **Les Écréhous is not only an important fishing area but also a Ramsar site, a Marine Protected Area and a popular recreational destination. How has the Department balanced the interests of conservation, fishing and recreation when developing this proposal?**

The proposed expansion of the No Parlour Pot Zone achieves an appropriate balance between conservation, fishing and recreation interests. The measure protects a larger area of ecologically important reef habitat and supports recovery of lobster stocks, while allowing continued commercial fishing activity through the use of alternative gear types. Recreational access and enjoyment of the area are unaffected and will be enhanced for the recreational fishers who use the area. By promoting stock recovery and long-term fishery sustainability without imposing wider restrictions on marine users, the proposal delivers environmental, economic and social benefits in line with the objectives of the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan

9. **What consultation has been undertaken with Jersey fishers, French licence holders and other marine stakeholders, and what concerns were raised during that process?**

The proposal has been developed through extensive engagement with stakeholders over a number of years. Consultation has taken place through the Bay of Granville Agreement framework, including the Joint Advisory Committee and Joint Management Committee prior to Brexit, the Lobster Working Group established in 2019, and discussions with the Jersey Fishermen's Association. The proposed expansion was subsequently brought forward with support from fishing industry representatives in both Jersey and France. As a result, the proposal reflects both scientific evidence regarding stock status and the practical experience of those who fish within the area. As this proposal follows RAMSAR boundaries, the Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group have also been consulted and agree with the principles of the proposal.

10. **What measures will be used to determine whether the expanded protected area has been successful, and over what period does the Department expect any ecological or fisheries benefits to become apparent?**

The effectiveness of this measure will be evaluated through analysis of iVMS data alongside logbook declarations. This assessment will enable Marine Resources to determine the extent to which the measure has influenced fishing activity and delivered environmental and fisheries management benefits. Anecdotally, fishers who use the area are expecting to see the benefits from this measure after approximately 6 months.

11. **If monitoring demonstrates that lobster stocks continue to decline following implementation of these Regulations, what further fisheries management measures would the Department be prepared to consider?**

    Please see respond to question 6.

12. **The proposed amendment expands a no parlour pot zone rather than establishing a no-take zone. What assessment has been undertaken of whether the current approach provides sufficient protection to achieve the desired recovery of lobster stocks, and why was a more comprehensive no-take designation not considered necessary?**

A full no-take zone was not considered necessary to achieve the management objectives of this proposal. Reducing the use of highly efficient parlour pots within an expanded area of productive lobster habitat is likely to increase stock abundance and spawning biomass while allowing commercial fishing activity to continue. This targeted approach delivers conservation and fisheries benefits while minimising socio-economic impacts on the fishing industry.

At a time when many commercial fishers are facing significant economic pressures, including declining catches, increasing operating costs and challenging market conditions post Brexit, it is important that management measures are both effective and proportionate. The lobster fishery remains the mainstay of much of the Jersey fleet, and many fishers are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a viable livelihood. A no-take zone would remove access to an important fishing area entirely, potentially placing additional strain on businesses that are already under pressure and displacing fishing effort into other fishing grounds.

I hope this letter satisfactorily addresses the matters raised by the Panel. However, should the Chair or Panel Members have any further questions, I would be happy to provide additional information or arrange a briefing with officers as appropriate.

Yours sincerely



Senator Mary Le Hegarat
Minister for Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries