"Determination of Aquaculture/ Foreshore Licensing application –T09/520

Galway Gourmet Oysters Ltd has applied for authorisation to cultivate Pacific Oysters using an adjustable longlines basket system on the inter-tidal foreshore on a *17.745* hectare site (*T09/520A*) in Mweeloon Bay, Co. Galway.

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has determined that it is in the public interest to grant the licences sought. In making his determination the Minister considered those matters which by virtue of the Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1997, and other relevant legislation, he was required to have regard. Such matters include any submissions and observations received in accordance with the statutory provisions. The following are the reasons and considerations for the Minister's determination to grant the licences sought: -

a. *Scientific advice is to the effect that the waters are suitable;*

b. *Public access to recreational and other activities can be accommodated by this project;*

c. *The proposed development should have a positive effect on the economy of the local area;*

d. *All issues raised during Public and Statutory consultation phase;*

e. *There are no effects anticipated on the man-made environment heritage of value in the area;*

f. *No significant effects arise regarding wild fisheries;*

g. *The site is located within the Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation and Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area. An Article 6 Assessment has been carried out in relation to aquaculture activities in the SAC/SPA. The Licensing Authority's Conclusion Statement (available on the Department's website) outlines how aquaculture activities in this SAC/SPA, including this site, are being licensed and managed so as not to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of the Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA;*

h. *Scientific observations related to the Appropriate Assessment received during the licensing consultation process are addressed in the Licensing Authority's Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement;*

i. *Taking account of the recommendations of the Appropriate Assessment the aquaculture activity at this site is consistent with the Conservation Objectives for the SAC/SPA;*

j. *No significant impacts on the marine environment and the quality status of the area will not be adversely impacted;*

k. *The updated Aquaculture and Foreshore licences contain terms and conditions which reflect the environmental protection now required under EU and National law."*