

Torrige – a great place to live, work and visit

Riverbank House, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2QG



**The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

27th July 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

Torrige District Council declares urgent need for ocean recovery and calls on government to take action.

At a recent meeting of Torrige District Council, Councillors voted unanimously in favour of a Motion for the Ocean and declared an urgent need for ocean recovery (attached for information). In making this declaration, we recognised that our ocean is in crisis and that local government has an essential role to play in recovering the health of our ocean. In Torrige, like the rest of the planet, we are witnessing the ocean crisis first-hand and this is impacting our local communities and our local economy. We have committed to doing everything we can locally, but we cannot do it alone.

Our ocean recovery declaration also committed us to write to central government asking you to do everything within your power to put the ocean in net recovery by 2030. Developed by leading ocean experts: Emily Cunningham from the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, Cllr Dr Pamela Buchan, a marine social scientist and Plymouth City Councillor, Nicola Bridge of the Ocean Conservation Trust, and with input from specialists at the University of Plymouth, the model Motion for the Ocean suggests central government do this by:

- a) Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and Natural England have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
- b) Ensuring coastal communities have a meaningful say in the development of marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes
- c) Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.

**Mr Ken James
Leader of the
Council**
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Chief Executive
Steve Hearse

- d) And by listening to marine scientific advice, including marine social science, to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
- i) **Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.**
 - ii) **Consider levelling up, marine conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.**
 - iii) **Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.**
 - iv) **Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.**
 - v) **Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.**

We recognise that this government strives to be a world leader in marine conservation, but more needs to be done to move from ocean decline to recovery – for the good of our economies, our communities, and the natural environment on which they all depend. We look forward to your response and your action to put our ocean in net recovery by 2030.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Ken James
Leader of the Council



Mr Steve Hearse
Chief Executive