

**JERSEY FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION LTD**  
**The Fish Quay, La rue Gossette**  
**La Collette**  
**St Helier**

19-08-15

ref; Transfer of Functions.

Dear Sirs Madams,

Whilst it is impractical to write and submit a detailed account, I trust that the following comment will be of use in the review of the transfer of functions, in relation to Fisheries and the broader marine resource.

For the record Jersey Fishermen's Association acts not only as a representative body for the commercial fishing sector, but regularly engages first hand in dialogue and negotiations, both on and off island on matters directly related to management of the marine resource. Hence the political and legislative framework under which the industry, as well as the States of Jersey Fisheries Department function, is of paramount importance to this organisation and the industry it represents.

Our experience in past years, during which time the Fisheries portfolio rested both with the minister for environment and the minister for Economic development, was that our industry and arguably the broader marine resource was suffering as a result of the “shared responsibilities”.

A salient example (among many), was the effort to resolve the issue of the Jersey FQAs. These are effectively units of fish quota which were allocated to Jersey fishing vessels in the past, based on fishing records, and which can be either used to give our fishermen access to fish stocks around the island or alternatively leased out to UK interested parties. They are consequently very valuable both in the monetary sense as well as from a socio-economic perspective. Efforts to have the FQA units returned from the UK and made available to the island, had taken a number of years to resolve, when at the eleventh hour, the then Environment minister (Robert Duhamel), intervened, stating that the minister for ED did not have the right to negotiate on the issue. The matter was put on hold and remains unresolved.

Perhaps another pertinent example, in this instance a decision taken by the previous minister minister for ED, illustrates the point well. The minister signed off the permit required for the commencement of survey work for the GJ3 (Guernsey Jersey), sub-marine electricity cable, without consulting with his Deputy who was well aware that both the French and Jersey fishing industries had both expressed the need for advance dialogue, primarily in order to avoid conflict with fishing gear. As a result French fishermen were angered that their rights of access in the Granville Bay Zone had not been respected and for Jersey fishermen, the consequences were that several thousand pounds worth of fishing gear was lost.

Arguably neither of the above issues, nor any in a similar vein, will have occurred, had there been a single minister and at that, one with a better day to day understanding of the industry.

Whilst there may potentially have been personalities which compounded issues, it was clear that in the past, an assistant minister who effectively carried the portfolio, whilst reporting to two ministers

was always going to be constrained in their work. Equally the duplication in presenting reports to two ministers created extra work load.

It could be viewed as subjective, but the practical experience of the JFA, was that under ED, fisheries, when viewed from a narrow economic return perspective, was the “poor” relation in comparison to the other sectors for which the minister held responsibilities. Clearly fisheries and the marine resource in general, have an importance to the island of Jersey, far beyond the economic element. There is a significance from a cultural perspective, it is historically important and of course as part of the environment, extremely important socially.

It is therefore likely that the remit of the minister for environment, is much better aligned to decision making and progression of regulation over the marine resource, than that of the ED minister, who's bottom line will always be influenced by the financial consequences of his decisions.

At the time of the last elections and subsequent ministerial reshuffle, the JFA spoke with the relevant ministers and subsequently met with the Chief Minister. Our advice was that agriculture and fisheries did not necessarily need to sit under the same minister, despite the two sectors being linked politically in the past. . Agriculture having a much greater need for financial support, had requested to be placed with ED.

The fishing industry par-contra requires not a big budget, rather a minister capable of understanding the industry in the context of the broader marine environment and a minister able to offer a more hands on approach.

It is a credit to the CM that his decisions to move the functions covering the marine resource, to a single ministerial department, were taken “after” consultation with the fishing industry.

Regrettably this document cannot be more comprehensive, however it is hoped that the examples and detail provided will serve to illustrate why the JFA continues to believe that the transfer of functions for fisheries specifically, is for the better.

Yours Sincerely Don Thompson  
President; Jersey Fishermen's Association.