

## Choosing sentiment over science for fisheries management

### Seafood Ireland Alliance expresses disappointed with Government decision on 6 nautical mile ban

The Seafood Ireland Alliance (SIA) were disappointed but not surprised by Minister Heydon's and Dooley's announcement of the banning of trawlers over 18m in length inside the 6nm and baseline zones from October 2026. Whilst the ban is general and far reaching the true target is the sprat fishery, which has been the focus of recent public campaigns.

Despite repeated calls by the Seafood Ireland Alliance for the sprat fishery to be effectively and sustainably managed the government has instead opted to ignore the science and bow to populism.

A spokesperson for the SIA said, *"Whilst the ban will exclude larger vessels it will do nothing to improve the science or the management of the sprat fishery and does not address the need for science-based management in our fisheries."*

The SIA recognises the need to improve how inshore waters are managed. But stress that Brexit has already put huge pressure on Irish boats—big and small—through lost quotas. *"These new restrictions would only add to that pressure, without solving any of the underlining management issues in inshore fisheries"*, the spokesperson said.

Further, he added, *"This blanket ban will displace boats into whitefish and prawn fisheries already under pressure. It will also force those vessels that are barely over 18m further offshore to fish in adverse weather conditions, jeopardising the safety of fishermen on board"*.

In reiterating the SIA's disappointed with the Ministers decision, the spokesperson said, *"The Government and the Department seem to believe those outside the industry carry more credibility than the fishing industry. Constructive engagement with the whole of industry along with BIM and the Marine Institute leading to effective and long-term sustainable management would have been a far better approach"*.

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