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25th February 2016.

Dear Charlotte, Marine Aggregates and Marine Conservation Zones.

Thank you for your letter of 18<sup>th</sup> February, replying to ours of 31<sup>st</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> February, and particularly for a copy of Natural England's formal response to aggregate application 453/488 and the scoping response to the Goodwin Sands application. This assistance is appreciated.

With regard to "manufactured sand" (the Kemco/Kayasand process) as an alternative to marine sourced sand you are, of course, correct to state that it is for discussion with the industry to determine the logistical, technical and economic viability of using this method. This is what we hope the Minister, George Eustice MP, will endorse and in so doing commission an *independent* assessment. If he agrees and elects for this, we will advise you.

From a conservation perspective, we are sure that Natural England appreciates the potential merit of this alternative source of sand relative to virgin marine sand; and, we ask that Natural England bear this potential in mind and recommend its evaluation to licensing authorities when conservation-designated marine sites are involved.

With regard to the discharge licence application by Magnox Limited (Bradwell) in the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ, we note that you have spoken with the local area team staff who advise that Natural England have not yet been formally consulted on this application, but expect to be in the coming weeks. We appreciate your offer that Natural England advice can be made available to us once it has been submitted to the Environment Agency.

In order to be quite clear about this matter, can you please confirm that the following is correct:

1. Natural England was not consulted by the Environment Agency and the applicant, Magnox Limited, with regard to the original 2014 permit to discharge – which expired June 2015 – in the matter of its potential impact on the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ.
2. Natural England has not been consulted by the Environment Agency and the applicant, Magnox Limited, with regard to the new 2015 permit application following expiry of the 2014 permit, nor has Natural England been consulted about any "extension" of the 2014 permit itself, in the matter of the potential impact on the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ.

Assuming you are able to confirm both points, may we advise that we would be grateful to receive a copy of the Natural England formal response once it has been made to the Environment Agency; and, in the event of you having to qualify any of the preceding statements can you please advise fully.

Yours sincerely

S.D. Eades

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