



FYRIR:

Norðurþing

DAGSETNING:

19 JAN 2023

Til þeirra er málið varðar,

Athugasemdir við deiliskipulag
(Arguments against kelp factory)

On behalf of Ocean Missions, I would like to express our strong opposition for the implementation of the kelp factory in Húsavík.

Biological Importance of the kelp

Kelp forest ecosystems provide important habitats for a diverse assemblage of invertebrates, fish, and marine top-predators such as seabirds and sea mammals. Further, they have an important ecological role by supporting the production of oxygen and carbon sink and therefore their protection is key to achieve the protection of strategic marine areas.

Environmental impacts

a project worth three billion ISK, where a factory vessel will be in charge of removing (not just cutting) large quantities of kelp from the sea bottom near Skjálfandi Bay, with unknown consequences for the local biodiversity and the primary productivity. They claim that they will be monitoring the kelp recovery while operating. However, this approach is far from being preventive and it is likely that solid results would come when it is too late.

No significant benefits for the community

In a personal interview with Íslandsþari ehf, they mentioned that while all the kelp drying process will take place in a big industrial facility by the harbour, the product (dry kelp) will be most likely exported to Europe and Asia and not being commercialized in Iceland, bringing very low or zero income to the country. Further, they argue that this project can create 80-90 jobs positions for the locals but the current unemployment rate in Húsavík is below 2,5% and it seems that most of the jobs will be taken by specialists coming from Akureyri.



OCEAN
MISSIONS
kt: 631219-0470

The community is not involved in any project/outcome

Íslandsþari ehf, insists on validating the project saying the applications of the final product is beneficial for the environment (eg, applications in natural medicines, biofuel). However as far as we are concerned, currently there no compromises of working on these initiatives with any local institution, which shows solely economical interest of the private sector.

Taking advantage of the gaps in the Icelandic law

Currently, marine harvesting activities do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment according to the Icelandic law. Projects of these characteristics have been heavily criticized in Norway and Scotland primarily because of environmental losses and lack of responsibility.

Need for ocean protection in Iceland

Iceland has not yet defined specific biodiversity objectives in its national Arctic policy and is behind schedule on delivering the goals proposed by the United Nations to protect at least 30% of the oceans by 2030 and in achieving the 12 UN sustainable development goals set in 2015, particularly regarding number 14 "life below water" (United Nations, 2015).

Yet, in 2012 the local community, together with the University of Iceland Húsavík Research Centre, stated their interest in nominating part of the Hope Spot (Skjálfandi Bay) as a marine protected area and it was recognized by international experts in marine planning. However no further steps were taken at that time. In early 2022, the Hope Spot area was identified as within the targeted area for conservation proposed by WWF ArcNet , an Arctic Ocean Network of Priority Areas for Conservation. Very recently a submission for a Mission Bleu Hope Spot was submitted by Ocean Missions with the support of the community representatives. A comprehensive report that gathers scientific and social arguments to propose the area (Skjálfandi bay- Grímsey and Eyjafórdur) as of critical importance for the ocean health and protection. <https://oceanmissions.org/marine-protection-hope-spot/>.

Kær kveðja,

Belén García Ovide

CEO/ framkvæmdastjóri
www.oceanmissions.org

 belen.oceanmissions@gmail.com

 841-0906

 Hafnarstétt 3, 640 Húsavík