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Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee
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The Orkney Islands (Landing of Crabs and Lobsters) Order 2016: SSI 2016/50

Thank you for the RACCE Committee's questions regarding the above named instrument, as considered by the Committee during its meeting of 24 February 2016.

Regarding the exemption for foreign fishing boats, the Order was made in accordance with Article 46 of Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98, which authorises Member States to take certain national measures for the conservation and management of stocks. Article 46 states that these measures can be applied solely to the fishermen of the Member State concerned, and this is why exemptions have been included.

Regarding whether foreign fishing boats fish for velvet crab in the area in question, the Order's provisions encompass the six nautical miles around the Orkney Islands, as shown in the illustrative map. As the UK has the exclusive right to fish within six nautical miles, no foreign fishing boats are able to fish for velvet crab, or any other species, within this area.

I hope this information will provide clarity to the Committee on these issues.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD