To:  
Excmo Sr. D. Fernando Clavijo Batlle  
Excmo. Sr. D. Alejandro Narvay Quintero Castañeda  

Cc:  
D. Juan Armiche Ramos Quintero  
Dña. María Isabel Artime García  
Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries  

5th October 2023  

Dear Excmo. Sr. D. Fernando Clavijo Batlle and Excmo. Sr. D. Alejandro Narvay Quintero Castañeda,

We, the undersigned groups, are writing to ask the Government of the Canary Islands to reject the current plans by Nueva Pescanova to establish an octopus farm in the port of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Since 2019, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and many national and international organisations have expressed their serious concerns to the Canary Islands and Spanish governments and the EU Commission about this developing industry. Over the last three years, there has been increasing opposition to the development of octopus farming by scientists, environmental and welfare NGOs, and the public, and the issue has attracted significant international media attention.

Several online petitions have launched opposing Nueva Pescanova’s plans to farm octopuses in Spain, achieving millions of signatures. NGOs from different sectors around the world have joined the movement against octopus farming. Protests have been organised at national and international level, asking the Spanish and Canary Islands’ governments to stop Nueva Pescanova’s plans. Citizens, NGOs, and well-known influencers have taken to social media to express their opposition to the project.
These public concerns have not gone unnoticed. At the policy level, several MEPs have expressed their opposition to the farm, bringing the issue to the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC), made up of industry, science, and NGO experts on aquaculture, formed to advise the European Commission and Member States, have created a specific working group on octopus farming given the problems and concerns that this new industry presents. Outside the EU, Washington State has proposed a Bill banning octopus farming, and the UK has legally recognised cephalopods as sentient beings. Hawaiian authorities have closed the Kanaloa octopus farm, and in Canada, a governmental petition was proposed to ban octopus farming. Moreover, the well-recognised seafood certification labelling schemes RSPCA and Friend of the Sea (FOS) have already announced that they will not certify farmed octopus products.

It is important to stress that octopuses are wild animals profoundly unsuited to farming, and there are serious sustainability and animal welfare problems associated with this industry's development. We refer to the CIWF report Octopus Factory Farming – A Recipe for Disaster, in which the scientific evidence relating to octopuses and the consequences of farming them was reviewed. Additionally, we refer to Uncovering the Horrific Reality of Octopus Farming, a report by CIWF and Eurogroup for Animals highlighting the problematic issues with the farm plans that Nueva Pescanova submitted to the General Directorate of Fishing and the Government of the Canary Islands. A report by scientists at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) called Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans, also concluded that higher welfare farming is impossible for octopuses.

As naturally solitary animals, octopuses would not fare well in the group conditions and high stocking densities typical of farming systems. These intelligent animals could not express their natural behaviours, confined in barren underwater tanks. Most importantly, there is currently no scientifically validated method for the humane slaughter of octopuses. According to reliable sources, Nueva Pescanova is planning to kill octopuses by submerging them in tanks containing water with ice, a method scientifically recognised for resulting in a painful, stressful, and slow death.

Octopus farming is also unsustainable. Octopuses are carnivorous animals, and therefore, rearing these animals requires that they be fed animal protein. Thus, octopus farming would require capturing large quantities of fish or other marine organisms to feed the farmed octopuses, exacerbating overfishing of oceans.

In light of the overwhelming international public opposition to the octopus farm opening in the Canary Islands, as well as the growing political concerns over this project, your subsequent actions are of great importance. Public opinion as well as the scientific community should not be ignored, nor should the significant risks allowing a factory farm to be built would pose to the environment, your communities, local biodiversity and tourist trade. We, therefore, ask that you reject the planning application to develop the farm on the grounds of animal cruelty, environmental risks, and the negative impact it may have on your community.
We hope you will give our request due consideration and are open to discussing the points mentioned in our letter. In May 2023, the previous General Director of Fisheries in the Government of the Canary Islands, D. Carmelo Dorta Morales, agreed to meet with us in-person. We would welcome such an opportunity to discuss this in more detail and remain at your disposal if you have any questions or need further information.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Compassion in World Farming and the signatories listed below.

Dr Elena Lara
Research Manager – Fish, Compassion in World Farming

**Signatories**

- Animal Law Italia
- Animals Aotearoa
- Animal Legal Defense Fund
- Animal Save Movement
- Aquatic Life Institute
- Barcelona Animal Save
- Born Free Foundation
- Catholic Concern for Animals
- Climate Save Movement
- Compassion in World Farming
- Crustacean Compassion
- Direct Action Everywhere
- Ecologistas en Acción
- Empatía
- Equalia
- Essere Animali
- Ethical Seafood Research
- Eurogroup for Animals
- FAADA
- Fish Welfare Initiative
- Freedom 4 Animals
- Green REV Institute
- Greenpeace España
- In Defense of Animals
- KYMA Sea conservation and research
- LadyFreethinker
- Loomus
- Loowatt
- Menorca Preservation
- Mercy for Animals
- Ocean Born Foundation
- Ocean Culture Life
• Sy Montgomery, American naturalist, Author of the book “The Soul of an Octopus”
• Tim Lang, Emeritus Professor of Food Policy, at City, University of London
• Toby Knowles, BSc (Agric), MSc, PhD(Cantab), CStat, C Biol, CSci, FRSB, FHEA, Professor of Farming and Food Science, University of Bristol Veterinary School