



**10 April 2024**

**Submission**

**From: Oysters Tasmania**

**To: Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**Re: Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Levies Bill 2024 and related bills**

Oysters Tasmania represents Tasmania's 45 oyster farmers, who employ more than 300 Tasmanians across regional Tasmania to sustainably produce a premium product.

Oysters Tasmania opposes the Agriculture (Biosecurity Protection) Levies Bill 2024 and related bills.

The beneficiaries of federal biosecurity efforts are the importers who are granted permission to import despite their creation of biosecurity risks. The costs of federal biosecurity efforts should be entirely recovered from importers.

If revenue must be collected from domestic sources, the form of revenue collection should be efficient. This suggests that broad existing taxes should be relied on.

Any attempt to create from scratch a federal taxing regime covering the Tasmanian oyster farming sector, which is not currently subject to a federal agricultural levy, would involve transitional, administration, and compliance costs that would represent a prohibitively high proportion of revenue collected. It would also involve great arbitrariness.

- The Australian Government does not know the identity of Tasmanian oyster farmers, nor the value of their production.
  - In fact, no one knows the value of their production. The Tasmanian state government asks Tasmania oyster farmers for the number of oysters supplied each quarter, but does not ask for information on prices, and does not impose any charges on oyster numbers, weights, or values. Any estimate of value is essentially guesswork, and guesswork is not a legitimate basis for taxation.
- The Australian Government does not know the identity of those who gather oysters, either commercially or recreationally, nor the value of this production. No organisation knows this.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely,

Duncan Spender, CEO, Oysters Tasmania