

House of Commons

City of London (Markets) Bill

1. Petitioner information

In the box below, give the name and address of each individual, business or organisation submitting the petition. Please note that names and addresses listed here will be provided to the Bill's promoter, but will be redacted in the version of the petition published on the Parliament website.

Bags of Taste Limited, London
Makhdoom Foods Limited, London
PM Prime Fish, London
L&A Fishmonger, London
Amjad Choudry, Leyton
Zafar Iqbal, London
Alicia Weston, London
Fi Glover, London
Christine Jackson, London
Anamaria Rusu, London
Bogdan Rusu, London
Trevor Daniel, London
Cameron Martin, London
Doria Gonzalez, London
Sandra Lousada London
Kathleen Kelliher, London
Philip Irvine, London
Letticia Irvine, London
Sam McMullen, London
Tamara Tracz, London
Maxine Cupitt, London
Susanna Davies-Crook, London

Julia Jackson, London
Tamara Stoll, London
Martin Phipps, London
Sophie Gardiner, London
Mariarosa Frasca, London

In the box below, give a description of the petitioners. For example, “We are the owners/tenants of the addresses above”; “My company has offices at the address above”; “Our organisation represents the interests of...”; “We are the parish council of...”.

Bags of Taste is an organisation that supports people living in food poverty. Many of the people it supports shop in clearing markets across London. These markets allow them to access low cost fresh produce, including fish, that is often towards end of life – which means that they can buy it cheaply and the food does not go to waste.

Makhdoom Foods, PM Prime Fish and L&A Fishmonger are fishmongers who primarily source the fish they sell from Billingsgate market

The remaining petitioners are local residents who shop in the local clearing market, Ridley Road, that is will be detrimentally affected. Much of the fish sold in the market is sourced in Billingsgate.

2. Objections to the Bill

In the box below, write your objections to the Bill and why your property or other interests are **directly and specially affected**. Please number each paragraph.

Only objections outlined in this petition can be presented when giving evidence to the Committee. You will not be entitled to be heard by the Committee on new matters not included in your written petition.

1. The current proposed closure of Billingsgate Market, with no replacement, is premature and we believe that it should not be permitted until a suitable replacement is certain. Our petition is on behalf of market traders from Ridley Road Market in Hackney, London, whose business relies on fish sourced from Billingsgate market and who would close without it; and local residents who use the local market and would also be affected.
2. We are concerned that the information on this closure with no replacement has not been well disseminated and as such we believe that the number of objections may be lower than they would otherwise be. Only 1 of the 6 fishmongers that I spoke to on Ridley Road knew that the replacement market in Dagenham had been cancelled; they all believed that the market was moving to Dagenham and they would be fine.
3. In addition, the small, minority run businesses that are typical of these small fishmongers have limited language skills and on their own, may feel both disempowered and incapable of engaging with Parliament in such a formal manner. As some put it “oh my God, what will we do? We can do nothing” and “these big people already made the decision”
4. On speaking to 6 local fish sellers, one is part of a larger organisation that is intimately linked with Billingsgate; 2 source from wholesalers direct or primarily sell frozen fish and believe they would be OK. However, 3 traders (notably, the smallest), source their fish from Billingsgate where they visit 3x a week.
5. The 3 listed petitioner businesses say that they would close if there was no central fish market that they could access. They employ staff (2-3 each) and everyone would be made redundant. Specifically, they said that they cannot afford to buy a whole container of fish, in Billingsgate they can shop with several different distributors for smaller quantities, and compare prices to buy the best value fish that their customers demand. If there was no central market they would need to “spend the whole day driving around London” to get the same fish from different suppliers, as they would not be willing to deliver such small quantities. One business owner said that this is the only business he knows, and would end up on benefits as he didn’t have any other options.
6. By forcing through this closure with no replacement there is an effective concentration of power in the hands of those businesses who are large enough to command good relationships with wholesalers, and disadvantage those smaller businesses who rely on a market to source produce.
7. Fish is a product uniquely suited to a market situation. Because fish goes off, and through varying stages of freshness, a market enables the fish to find a suitable market price and be sold before going to waste. It is this low-priced fish that ends up in markets in low income areas like Ridley Road. A well functioning market reduces costs for all involved, in any commodity, and is absolutely critical

for perishable items, particularly fish.

8. People living in food poverty and on low incomes are often reliant on the low cost of local markets, particularly clearing markets like Ridley Road and others across London, to access cheap and healthy food. Please remember that fish is one of the healthiest foods around.
9. Particularly for ethnic minorities, fish is often a large part of their diet and so the impact is disproportionate on ethnic minorities, who are usually also on lower incomes.
10. Local residents are concerned that there will not only be an impact on their ability to buy fish locally at a low price, but also that this will continue to undermine the once-thriving Ridley Road market, and similar ones across London. This will therefore reduce access for the lowest income people to fresh and healthy food, not only fish but the wide range that is on sale.

3. What do you want to be done in response?

In the box below, tell us what you think should be done in response to your objections to the Bill. You do not have to complete this box if you do not want to.

You can include this information in your response to the previous section on 'Objections to the Bill' if you prefer. Please number each paragraph.

1. Billingsgate Market is currently in an accessible site that is not so time consuming for traders to visit. It is something that businesses around London have come to depend on, providing access to some of the healthiest food to be found in London. Ideally it should remain in this accessible location.
2. We believe that any legislation to allow the closure of the market should be delayed till a viable, accessible and alternative site has been found. It is premature to close the market at this time when the Dagenham proposal has fallen through and livelihoods hang in the balance.