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Fergus D Cochrane  
Clerk  
Public Petitions Committee  
TG.01  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



Your ref:  
Our ref: F3502052  
5 January 2010

Dear Fergus

**CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1376**

Thank you for your letter of 8 December 2010 to Roy Sturrock about Petition PE1376 seeking a response from the Scottish Government to a number of questions relating to the above petition following consideration by the Public Petitions Committee at its meeting on 7 December. I shall respond to these questions in the order in which they have been raised.

- **Will you take necessary action, as proposed by the petitioner, to bring about a ban on the use of free methanol released by aspartame and to run an awareness campaign amongst health professionals to alert them of free methanol present in our diet?**

No. Current evidence does not support a ban.

- **Is there a contradiction in attitudes here when aspartame is removed from soft drinks but not from food?**

No. We think there may be some confusion flowing from the SPiCe briefing prepared for the Committee on the 8 December which unhelpfully did not include the full discussion around this issue when discussed previously in 2006. If it had it would have been clearer that the reason some drinks were not permitted under the Schools Nutrition Act was not because of the presence of aspartame but because of other health related reasons. Therefore, the presence of aspartame in some permitted drinks and solid foods is consistent with the Government position.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee in its further consideration of the Petition.

Yours sincerely

**FERGUS MILLAN**

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