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Mr Howlett
Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Friday 8 March 2013

Dear Mr Howlett

RE: Petition PE1459

Thank you for your letter of 24 January regarding the above petition and The Crown Estate's role with regards to coastal erosion.

The Crown Estate manages around half of the foreshore in Scotland and the rest of the UK. The remainder of Scotland's foreshore is owned by a range of private, commercial and public interests.

Coastal protection and flood defence in the UK is the responsibility of the relevant Local Authority under the terms of the Coast Protection Act 1949 and the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. It would be wrong for The Crown Estate to take steps in relation to coastal erosion when it is a matter for individual Local Authorities to consider in the context of their local priorities.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding The Crown Estate has no legal responsibility for coastal protection we do work closely with the relevant authorities where we can assist, when statutory works or plans are required on Crown Estate land.

We very much recognise the challenge that communities face in regard to coastal erosion and the very real impact that flooding, and the risk of flooding, has on residents and businesses. In this respect, despite having no legal duty to do so, we have supported Local Authorities in some preventative or restorative works as a responsible land manager and 'good neighbour'. In Moray, for example we have worked with the Council on certain land-based projects such as road upgrades (for example, to ensure alternative access is available when primary routes are impacted by coastal flooding) and on removal of debris from the River Spey. Over 2011/12 and 2012/13 we have spent around circa £26,000 on such works in the River Spey.

Through our Marine Stewardship Programme, The Crown Estate funds research and community projects to help promote and inform good management of coastal areas within our portfolios. In recent years this has included, for example, funds totalling nearly £18,000 for the Coast Hebrides coastal care project which includes a range of beach and dune management, restoration and flood protection initiatives.

In discussion, the Committee raised a question regarding our revenue surplus so I am taking this opportunity to inform the Committee that we pay all net revenue surplus to the Treasury for the benefit of the public. In 2011/12, this totalled £240.2 million from across our UK-wide portfolio.

I hope this information is useful and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help further.

Yours sincerely

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