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Dear Convener

Thank you for the constructive and positive Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee report on the Islands (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1, published on 22 January 2018. Ahead of the plenary debate scheduled for Thursday 8 February 2018 I enclose the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations in the report.

My response also covers the recommendations made at Stage 1 by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee in their report published on 1 November 2017. I extend my thanks to both the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee and the Finance and Constitution Committee for their consideration of the Bill at Stage 1. I am copying this letter to their Conveners.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and the wider Parliament on the Bill.

Best wishes

HUMZA YOUSAF

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DELEGATED POWERS AND LAW REFORM COMMITTEE – ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL – STAGE 1 REPORT RESPONSE

Delegated Powers Provisions – section 7(3)

The Committee is not persuaded by the Government's explanation for why the powers in section 7(3) do not include a power to amend the schedule by modifying an entry. The Committee considers that to include this power would be consistent with the approach taken in earlier provisions, such as in section 6(2) of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. The Committee therefore recommends that a consistent approach should be taken to the drafting of this power, unless there is a good reason not to include the power to modify an entry. The Committee accepts that the exercise of the power is subject to scrutiny by the affirmative procedure.

The Scottish Government notes the recommendation and will bring forward amendments at Stage 2.

Section 21 - Regulations

The Committee accepts the ancillary powers contained in section 21(1) of the Bill in principle.

The Scottish Government welcomes the recommendation.