



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Roseanna Cunningham MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment,  
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c/o Clerk to the Committee  
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***By email only***

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Dear Roseanna

### **Update on marine issues**

The Committee discussed its work programme on 26 March and agreed to seek clarification and further information on a number of topics in relation to the marine environment. These are detailed below:

**Marine Strategy Framework Directive:** The Committee would welcome an update on the Scottish Government strategy and plans in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and indicators for Good Environmental Status after 2020, and the intention (or not) to keep pace with the EU.

**National Performance Framework:** The Committee previously expressed concern about the pace of development of the indicators of marine health and marine biodiversity and would welcome an update on the work on indicators that are capable of measuring biodiversity and the health of Scotland's seas, including detail on the process for this work, plans for consultation and development of a monitoring framework, and confirmation as to when these indicators will be in place. The Committee would also welcome an explanation as to how this work is linked to the Marine Strategy Framework report and planned consultation and how it will be aligned with EU and international biodiversity strategies. The Committee is interested to explore the detail of the definition of the indicators and how success will be measured.

**MPAs:** The Committee would welcome an update on progress with designating the four proposed additional MPAs, including whether it is still anticipated that these sites will be designated by the end of 2019. We would also welcome detail of the terms of reference for the review of the socio-economic impacts of MPAs, the approach, proposed stakeholder engagement and the timetable for undertaking the review. The Committee is also interested to know whether the

socio-economic impact assessment method will consider the likelihood and implications of displacement of fishing activity due to management measures.

**National deep-sea marine reserve:** The Committee would welcome an update on progress with the Scottish Government's plans to consult on the creation of a national deep-sea marine reserve, and whether it is still expected that this may be in place by the end of 2019.

**Seabird Conservation Strategy:** The Committee would welcome an update on the Scottish Government's work announced in the Programme for Scotland 2018-19 to identify actions to address the significant declines in seabird populations, including progress with the development of the proposed Seabird Conservation Strategy.

**Priority Marine Features:** The Committee understands the Scottish Government has been reviewing the PMF network to ensure adequate protection beyond the MPA network and a public consultation on PMFs has been undertaken and the review might consider other PMFs after completion of the current project. The Committee also understands that the full Sustainability Appraisal and how the Scottish Government proposes to manage fisheries to protect the 11 PMFs is to be subject to further consultation and measures implemented from 2019. We would welcome more detail on the current status of this work and plans to address the concerns about the impact of trawling and dredging.

**Monitoring and Compliance:** The Committee recently considered secondary legislation designating Loch Carron as an MPA to provide protection to the flame shell seabed. In relation to protection of PMFs and MPAs the Committee would welcome further information on the action the Scottish Government is currently undertaking or plans to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement including electronic vessel monitoring. The Committee would welcome your view on the current level of fines and whether this is a sufficient deterrent, and whether fines are linked to the costs of damage.

**Enhancement of the marine environment:** The Marine Scotland Act provides for the enhancement of the marine environment. The Committee would welcome detail of the Scottish Government's approach to this and how it is being addressed.

**Marine Scotland financial model:** The Committee heard from the Cabinet Secretary in January that Marine Scotland have been asked by the Scottish Government to review its charging model and look at opportunities as part of this exercise including efficiency savings. The Committee would welcome further information on this in terms of what Marine Scotland has been tasked with delivering, timescales, and whether the Scottish Government has considered strategic opportunities to deliver more marine environmental enhancement as part of this review.

**Inshore Fisheries Management:** The Committee is aware of the pilots exploring a more localised approach where fishing interests are central to the development of fisheries management; and spatial separation of operations, such as static (creeling) and mobile (trawling) within specified areas. The Committee would welcome further detail on this.

**Marine Tourism:** 2020 will be the year of Scotland's coasts and waters and the Committee is aware of the vision to increase the overall economic value of the marine tourism sector from £36m to over £450m by 2020. The Committee would welcome information on related projects to be supported by the Scottish Government in 2020.

**Marine Litter:** The Scottish Government's Programme for Government for 2018-2019 set out that the Government will "work with the fishing sector and coastal communities to develop proposals to tackle the issue of fishing litter and lost gear". The Future Fisheries Discussion paper states that the Scottish Government will explore mechanisms under which it will establish it as an offence to throw overboard any type of litter whilst at sea. The Committee would welcome further information on this work and the potential introduction of new offences for fishing vessels for marine litter. The Committee would also welcome a comprehensive note on the Scottish Government's approach and plans, including timescales, to address all forms of marine litter. The Committee would also welcome information on the approach to tackling this issue across the UK.

**Blue Carbon:** The Committee is aware of the [Blue Carbon Forum](#) to further understanding of blue carbon capture and storage, and begin developing knowledge of how disturbance affects these processes. The Committee would welcome an update on the Scottish Government's blue carbon research programme.

**Kelp:** The Committee is aware that the Scottish Government have set up a working group on kelp and would welcome further detail on the progress of the group in developing a strategy for kelp.

**EMFF:** What discussions has the Scottish Government had with the UK Government in relation to the EMFF and can you provide detail on any considerations of what a replacement scheme for Scotland might look like? The Committee would also welcome any further information on plans to consult with stakeholders on this, as well as details of any associated timescales.

The Committee looks forward to receiving a response from you by 14 June.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Martin MSP  
Convener  
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee