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Committee

The Scottish Parliament

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Dear Graeme,

Further to my letter of 17 November 2016, I am writing to inform the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee of my plans following consideration of the Right Hon Lord Bonomy's review of the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002.

I am grateful to the Rt Hon. Lord Bonomy for his comprehensive and authoritative review. He has identified a number of key areas where the meaning of the 2002 Act might be improved upon by addressing inconsistencies and clarifying key definitions. He also suggests the consideration of new reverse burden of proof and vicarious liability provisions, as well as the extension of the time limit in which prosecutions might be made. We will consult on each of these during the course of the current Parliamentary session.

Lord Bonomy has also recommended ways in which the scrutiny and accountability of hunts might be improved and we will invite stakeholders to develop a new Code of Practice for adoption by all mounted hunts as soon as possible, and to explore the potential for a new monitoring scheme. If viable, each of these could be implemented on a non-statutory basis for a trial period but statutory underpinning remains an option should it be deemed necessary.

Taken together, this package of measures will deliver a substantial improvement in the interpretation, operation and enforcement of the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002.

Yours

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM