

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cùisean Dùthchail agus na h-Àrainneachd  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment  
Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP

F/T: 0845 774 1741  
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Rob Gibson  
Convener, Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013

Dear Rob

**European Commission Work Programme 2013 – Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee priorities for engagement and scrutiny**

Thank you for your letter, outlining the Committee's priorities and its agreed actions. I am pleased to see the wide range of subject areas that the committee will be engaging on, and the importance that you have placed on these subjects.

You also asked for additional information on a number of topics, and I can update you on these.

- 1. Review of EU political and legal framework for organic production: The Committee would welcome information from the Scottish Government in relation to its engagement in the development of the proposal and the likely impact of the proposal on the agriculture and food production sectors in Scotland.**

*The Scottish Government met with members of the Scottish Organic Forum on the 19<sup>th</sup> March to seek their views on the recent European Commission consultation that is exploring how best to develop organic farming across the EU.*

*This discussion contributed to the development of the Scottish Government's response that was submitted to the European Commission. A key message in this response was the need to ensure that any revisions to the current regulatory framework are proportionate, and provide a clear and consistent approach to the control of organic agriculture across all member states.*

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*The Scottish Government continues to work with the UK Government (the Department of Environment, Food and Rural affairs – Defra) to ensure that Scotland's position is represented during these negotiations. The Commission is currently developing an impact assessment, which is ongoing. Our colleagues in Defra are liaising with officials in the Commission, to determine how best we, including Scotland, may contribute to the development of this impact assessment*

**2. Review of thematic strategy on air pollution and assessment legislation: The Committee agreed to monitor developments in this area and seeks information from the Scottish Government on how it plans to contribute to the review.**

*The Commission has been working on its review since late 2011. The Scottish Government has, in conjunction with other UK administrations, has been responding to the Commission's questionnaires and other information requests relating to the review. Through SEPA we have also responded to the Commission's current consultation and expect to be represented at Green Week this June, which has the theme of air quality. We will continue to monitor, and where appropriate engage, with the Commission and their proposals. In addition to this engagement with the Commission, the Government has also responded to the Committee of the Regions questionnaire on the proposals.*

**3. Review of waste policy and legislation: The Committee agreed to monitor developments in this area and seeks information from the Scottish Government on how it plans to contribute to the review.**

*The Scottish Government has, in conjunction with other UK administrations, been responding to the Commission's questionnaires and other information requests relating to the review. As the review progresses, we engage in any relevant EC working groups, either directly or through our contacts in Defra. The Scottish Government is already showing leadership in many areas of waste policy, and is well placed to help shape future direction, and we will look for opportunities to showcase Scotland's pioneering policies, legislation and initiatives, including hosting relevant workshops and knowledge sharing events. SEPA also inputs to a number of EC technical groups on waste policy and legislation, and this engagement will continue over the course of the review. We are also inputting to parallel EU activity on stimulating a circular economy through our delivery and technical experts, in Zero Waste Scotland and WRAP.'*

**4. Animal health law: The Committee believes there may be potential costs arising to the farming industry in relation to this proposal and it seeks information from the Scottish Government on its engagement in the development of the proposal.**

*The Scottish Government supports the development of the EU Animal Health Law which will provide a simplified structure for legislation in this area, ensuring a proportionate approach to the management of terrestrial and aquatic animal health risks.*

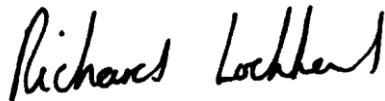
*We have been working with the UK Government to develop its work with stakeholder groups to ensure Scottish interests are reflected in the UK negotiating position. Scottish Government officials met with Scottish stakeholders in August 2012, further meetings will take place when the Commission has finalised the proposal.*

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*The Commission currently envisages finalising these in parallel with formal negotiations on the regulation at the end of April 2013.*

*The Scottish Government broadly supports the consolidation of the existing financial framework and the focus on value for money and effective implementation of programmes with clear objectives, but we still have concerns relating to the timing of the proposals, the detailed requirements and the detail of the funding provisions.*

If you need any more information, please let me know.



**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**