



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

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Change

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Dear Paul

### **Crofting law**

As part of its current work programme, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee agreed to write to you to seek an update on crofting law issues.

Following its consideration of the Crofting (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill earlier this year, and in light of recent developments such as the Crofting Law Group establishing its 'Crofting Law Sump' to consider crofting law issues and report to the Scottish Government, the Committee would welcome an update from you on the latest situation.

As you will recall, during the passage of the Bill, the Committee received a great deal of evidence on wider matters of crofting law not specific to the issue of owner-occupiers applying to decroft which was covered by the Bill. Much of the evidence the Committee heard, and much of what was debated, focussed on issues identified in other parts of crofting law, and also with calls for a more fundamental codification of crofting legislation.

In the Stage 3 debate, you told the Chamber—

“The committee’s stage 1 report and the Scottish Government’s response also addressed issues that are not included in the bill. I am all too aware that there are other issues to be addressed, both legislative and administrative, but that will not happen overnight. We all need some time to take stock and to ensure

that what we do next is right for crofting and for remote and rural Scotland. That will take some very careful consideration, and it is only right that such consideration involves the key stakeholders.

I do not think that another committee of inquiry on crofting is required, but I do think that the other issues highlighted during the course of the bill need to be addressed carefully, fairly and objectively if we are to ensure that crofting continues to provide cultural, social, economic and high-nature-value farming benefits. That is why I gave an undertaking to the Parliament during stage 1 of the bill that my officials will

“investigate, in consultation with stakeholders, what the best method might be for dealing with the outstanding issues”.—[*Official Report*, 6 June 2013; c 20857.]

Stakeholders should therefore expect contact from my officials to arrange a discussion on the next steps for crofting.”

Now that some time has passed since the Bill was enacted, and given that groups such as the Crofting Law Group have now turned their attention to how to take matters forward, the Committee would welcome an update from you, by the end of the year if possible, on the latest situation and likely next steps.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rob Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Rob Gibson MSP  
Convener