



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

Update on sea lice issues

As part of its current work programme, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment (RACCE) Committee agreed to write to you to seek an update on sea lice issues.

Following its consideration of the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill in 2012 and 2013, and the comments made during the passage of that Bill regarding sea lice issues, including the reporting of sea lice data, the Committee would welcome an update from you on the latest situation.

During all three stages of the passage of the Bill, the issue of the reporting of sea lice data was hotly debated, including debates on amendments brought forward by members of the RACCE Committee at stages 2 and 3.

None of the proposed amendments on this issue were successful and, during the Stage 3 debate, you confirmed that the industry would proceed with a voluntary approach to reporting sea lice data, with the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO) committing to reporting quarterly on a 30 area basis.

In the Stage 3 debate you gave a commitment to keep the success of the voluntary reporting system under review, via the Ministerial Group on Sustainable Aquaculture, stating—

“If it appears that the voluntary arrangement is not operating as expected and cannot be improved by voluntary means, we will use the existing powers in the 2007 act to legislate.”

The Committee notes that, despite its plea for the “tit-for-tat” nature of the exchanges between the fish farming and wild salmon industries to end, the debate on this issue has continued to rage in the media following the publication of quarterly reports by the SSPO.

The Committee would therefore welcome a report from you before the end of the year, if possible, on how the voluntary system has operated since the Bill was passed; whether you deem it to be successful; and if any consideration has been given to using the powers in the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2007 Act to legislate in this area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Gibson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Rob Gibson MSP
Convener