

Rob Gibson MSP
Convenor
Rural Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Committee
Committee Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

1 September 2015

Dear Rob

I would like to update the Committee on my consideration of changes to crofting law, following the submission of the Crofting Law Sump Report and recommendations to the Scottish Government earlier this year.

The report's authors and the Crofting Law Stakeholder Group have given careful thought to this work and it is an excellent example of how a collaborative approach can add value to the process. I believe that the work undertaken will help contribute towards identifying ways in which a stronger legislative framework can be developed to underpin crofting and improve the sustainability of rural and remote communities.

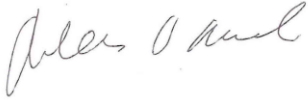
I understand that crofting stakeholders are currently developing a long-term vision for crofting in Scotland. This will help to further develop the role that crofting has to play as part of the broader agenda on areas such as land reform and rural development policy, which aim to empower communities to be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. As the crofting community develops this vision, the Scottish Government is keen to make a contribution, where appropriate, and to provide support so that as broad a range of views and interests as possible can be involved in this process.

With this in mind, and having given thorough consideration to the report's recommendations, I believe it is vital to consider the legislative changes required in the context of work that the crofting community is undertaking to develop a shared vision for crofting. It is also important that any changes to crofting law take account of broader policy developments, including the Scottish Government's wider programme of land reform and implementation of the new CAP scheme.

Given existing legislative commitments and the wide-ranging nature of the proposed changes to crofting legislation, some of which will require further exploration in order to identify solutions that are workable in practice and meet the needs of crofters, I want to engage further with the sector on developing a forward programme of work, including legislation that could be taken forward in the next parliamentary term.

I would like to thank the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee for its continuing interest in crofting. I would, of course, welcome any views from the Committee on this matter and look forward to continuing engagement on changes to crofting law and to developing the wider crofting work programme in partnership with those who have an interest in crofting.

Kind regards



AILEEN McLEOD