



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Ian Gordon
Salmon and Trout Association (Scotland)

Via email only

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Dear Mr Gordon

Public Petition PE01547 on conserving Scottish Wild Salmon

At its meeting on 9 March 2016¹ the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee considered your petition PE01547 on conserving Scottish Wild Salmon. Earlier in the meeting the Committee considered and rejected a motion to annul the Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Order (SSI/2016/115).² As a result, the regulations contained in this Order relating to the conservation of salmon stocks in Scotland will come into force on 31 March 2016.

During the Committee's debate on the motion to annul the Order, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Environment and Food, Richard Lochhead MSP (the Cabinet Secretary), confirmed the intention of the Scottish Government to move to a salmon conservation strategy, as soon as is possible, based on the best scientific evidence available and centred on a river-by-river approach.³

¹ Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee *Official Report* 9 March 2016, Cols 51-52: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10429&mode=pdf>

² SSI 2016/115: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2016/115/contents/made>

³ Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee *Official Report* 9 March 2016, Col 13: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10429&mode=pdf>

The Cabinet Secretary undertook to report back within 12 months to our successor committee in the next Session of the Parliament, on the progress of the Government's wild fisheries reform programme. This report will also cover the development of a data and research strategy to identify gaps in the scientific base underpinning decisions on wild fisheries management.⁴

As you will no doubt be aware, the strategies referred to by the Cabinet Secretary are part of the Scottish Government's draft provisions for a Wild Fisheries (Scotland) Bill and draft Wild Fisheries Strategy.⁵ The Government is currently undertaking a public consultation on the draft strategy and draft bill, and this will close on 2 May 2016.⁶

We expect the outcomes from this consultation to come before our successor committee in the next Session of the Parliament as part of that committee's scrutiny of a Wild Fisheries Bill. The Committee has agreed to draw these issues to the attention of our successor committee by way of our Session 4 Legacy Report, which was published on Monday 14 March 2016.⁷

In light of these positive developments, the Committee agreed to close your petition. On behalf of the Committee, can I take this opportunity to thank you for lodging your petition and for participating in the scrutiny of the formulation of Scottish Government policy in this important area.

I am copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform and officials at Marine Scotland, for their information.

I am also copying this to the Clerk of the Public Petitions Committee in relation to the closing of your petition.

Yours sincerely



Rob Gibson MSP
Convener

CC: Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment
Dr Aileen McLeod MSP, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
Willie Cowan, Head of Performance, Aquaculture and Recreational Fisheries, Marine Scotland
Jeff Gibbons, Head of Wild Fisheries, Marine Scotland
Stuart Middlemas, Head of Ecology Programme, Marine Scotland
Catherine Fergusson, Clerk, Public Petitions Committee

⁴ Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee *Official Report* 9 March 2016, Col 27: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10429&mode=pdf>

⁵ Scottish Government consultation on draft Wild Fisheries Bill: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/02/6138>

⁶ Draft Wild Fisheries Bill/Strategy consultation document: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/wild-fisheries-reform-team/draft-wild-fisheries-strategy>

⁷ Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, Session 4 Legacy Report: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/97468.aspx>