



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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By email only

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Dear Terry,

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee Inquiry into the Environmental Impacts of Salmon Farming

I am writing regarding the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee recent inquiry into the environmental implications of salmon farming. As you will aware, your colleagues at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have given evidence, both in person and in writing on several occasions to the Committee as part of this work.

On behalf of the Committee, I am seeking further information on a number of issues set out below:

Monitoring and consenting

In the recent submission SEPA stated it had reduced the permitted biomass at a number of farms where there were unacceptable impacts on the health of the sea bed.

- What were these unacceptable impacts and how were they identified?
- How many times was the permitted biomass reduced, over how many farms? and what was the subsequent impact of that reduction?
- What are the information gaps in relation to the sea-bed in the vicinity of fish farms?
- What proactive work has SEPA engaged in to monitor the impact of fish farms in the vicinity of protected features (PMF's, MPA's, SAC's)?
- What is the process and criteria for determining the programme of unannounced visits to fish farms and has this changed over time?
- What resource is SEPA currently allocating to monitoring and reporting on the sector?
- What change in resource is planned as a result of the proposed introduction of DZR and the expansion of the sector?

Depositional Zone Regulation

The Committee would welcome further detail on:

- The advantages and disadvantages SEPA envisage are associated with this approach;
- The basis and development of the regulation;
- The scientific evidence supporting the regulation, including any assumptions made;
- The peer review process for the DZR;
- How wider impacts (beyond deposition on the sea bed) are taken into account; and
- Stakeholder engagement in development of the DZR (including how views were taken into account).

The Committee would welcome further information on the development and implementation of a Scottish containment standard.

The Committee has written to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee of the Scottish Parliament to inform the start of its inquiry into the wider aquaculture industry. The Committee would appreciate a timely response from SEPA in order to ensure this information is of maximum value to our counterpart Committee. I therefore request a response by 28 March 2018.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Graeme Dey MSP
Convener
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee