Please find attached our original response and views regarding the Harbours Bill, these remain UK Chamber’s position on these issues.

*(Taken from their original response to the Scottish Government’s consultation on the Bill)*

**Q1. Do you agree with the Government’s plan to repeal section 10 of the Ports Act 1991 (which gives Scottish Ministers’ powers to require Trust Ports over a certain turnover threshold to prepare privatisation proposals)?**

Yes

We see absolutely no requirement for the power to be retained, it has no current relevance.

**Q2. Do you have any comments on the proposed introduction of a mediation step in section 31 of the Harbours Act 1964?**

We strongly support the introduction of a mediation stage. Port users are currently ill served by the provisions of the Harbours Act, on the rare occasions it is used and when making objection or appeal against harbours charges which are considered to be excessive. The entry level to the appeals process is currently set too high, by requiring the SoS to intervene and adjudicate and additionally the Act itself is not clear about the nature or process of conducting an appeal or its exact purpose. The existing arrangements make the process inaccessible to smaller companies and individuals. A mediation stage would allow users commercial interests to be more quickly, cheaply and effectively represented and this would lead to the quicker resolution of disputes. The provision of mediation rights would therefore enable the commercial interests of the users to be better represented. The membership of the UK Chamber is of the unanimous opinion that a mediation stage would represent a very significant improvement to the existing provisions and better protect all harbour users.

**Q3. Do you have any comments on the proposal to remove the requirement for six copies of a draft Harbour Order to be submitted along with the application for the Order (Schedule 3 to the Harbours Act 1964)?**

The suggestion to remove the requirement to submit numerous copies is fully supported it appears to be a common sense proposal which would reduce the bureaucratic burden of the application process.