

Minister for Parliamentary Business

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13 June 2013

Dear Neil

LOBBYING TRANSPARENCY (SCOTLAND) BILL

As you will remember, we met in October last year to discuss your proposal for a Member's Bill on lobbying transparency. I have been closely following your progress since then.

Parliament's Standing Orders (Rule 9.14.13), provides a mechanism whereby the Scottish Government can indicate that it will initiate legislation, within the same parliamentary session, to give effect to a Member's final proposal.

I am writing to inform you that the Government has opted to exercise this right in respect of your final proposal "*...to require certain individuals and organisations who lobby MSPs, Scottish Ministers or relevant public officials, either on their own account or on behalf of third parties, to record relevant information about their lobbying activity in a published register.*" and I enclose a copy of my letter to the Parliamentary authorities formally confirming this decision.

Even though I do not believe we face the same issues as Westminster, recent developments have shown it is important that we act now to put beyond doubt any question of a lack of transparency in respect of lobbying activities in Scotland. To that end, the Scottish Government wishes to bring to bear the resources it has at its disposal to help move matters forward.

The Government recognises the contribution you have made in taking forward the agenda on the regulation of lobbying activity. I would like to assure you that the work you have already undertaken will inform the Government's development of its own legislative proposals. With this in mind, I would be more than happy to meet and discuss both the decision itself and how the Government intends to take forward legislation.

The Government is committed to developing a cross-party consensus for improving the transparency of lobbying practice in Scotland, and will engage with a wide range of

stakeholders and the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee as part of that process.

I am copying this letter to the Convener of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee for information.

Yours for Scotland

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Fitzpatrick". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Joe" written in a cursive-like font and the last name "Fitzpatrick" written in a more blocky, cursive style. The signature is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

JOE FITZPATRICK