1. The Bill says that the Scottish Government should publish a national islands plan and then the Scottish Parliament should look at the plan. Do you agree with this?

Yes

What are your views on having a national islands plan?

It must be able to take into account the diversity of needs and difficulties experienced by different islands.

2. The Bill will require Scottish Ministers and certain Scottish public authorities to prepare islands impact assessments. Do you agree with this provision?

Yes

What are your views on this provision?

Again the islands are not a homogenous group

3. The Bill suggests that the Scottish Parliamentary constituency boundary of Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles) should be protected from any future changes. Do you agree with this?

Comments:

Not living in this constituency I cannot comment. However the move to redraw electoral boundaries to give so called equal representation between wards etc has done great damage. Elected members need to represent communities with their associated interests and this supersedes the numbers. Members will otherwise find themselves representing two conflicting views.

4. Each local government electoral ward usually elects 3 or 4 members. The Bill suggests that island areas may need fewer members (1 or 2). Do you agree?

What are your views on this proposal?

The number of electors should be the guide and how easy it is for members to access communities. It would be better for Coll and Tiree to have their own councillor at the expense of Mull losing one. A Mull councillor cannot be fully briefed on what is happening on Coll and Tiree when there are no direct ferries. Similarly Mull is represented by 4 councillors, 3 of whom do not live on the island.
Because the electors in the rest of the ward outnumber those on the island it is possible there could be no representation from the island.

5. **The Bill will says that Scottish Ministers should be able to create a marine licensing scheme for coastal waters. Do you agree?**

Yes

**Do you have any comments on how it should be used?**
This should be used to address environmental concerns. There are strong lobbies against marine conservation areas. But all marine activity needs to be required to operate to standards which will prevent the degradation of the marine environment. There needs to be monitoring and enforcement.

6. **Are you in favour of the Bill overall?**

Yes

**Is there anything else that you feel should be included or excluded from the Bill?**

Delegation of some budgets to Community Councils would enable more efficient and appropriate management of services such as maintenance of cemeteries, pothole filling, maintenance of public conveniences.

7. **Do you have any comments on the bill in relation to human rights or equalities?**

The introduction of RET needs to apply to commercial vehicles to reduce the additional costs of living on an island. While companies may not pass this reduction on to the customer at the time of introduction, in the long run it will delay price increases.

Islands in Argyll miss out on some special island provision because the majority of Argyll's population live on the mainland. This means services here are poorer than in the Western Isles and have to be subsidised by Council taxpayers on the mainland of Argyll rather than being spread across Scotland.