



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Presiding Officer
The Scottish Parliament
EH99 1SP

Monica Lennon MSP

18 February 2026

Dear Presiding Officer

Ecocide (Scotland) Bill - Stage 2 consideration

I am writing to provide my perspective to the Parliamentary Bureau as the Member in Charge of the Ecocide (Scotland) Bill in response to the letter from the Convener of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee dated 18 February.

I am very grateful to the Committee for the work undertaken so far on my Bill and I appreciate this is not a decision they can have come to lightly, indeed I understand a number of members of the Committee do not support the decision, as set out in the [Minutes](#).

Naturally I am hugely concerned that the Parliament's clear will, expressed at Stage 1 for the Bill to progress to the amendment stages, is not being taken forward by the Committee – despite a direction from the Bureau to do so. This decision may in turn limit the opportunity of Parliament to scrutinise and decide on the Bill at Stage 3 and I seek the Bureau's guidance in this matter.

Years of time and Parliamentary resource across a number of teams of officials and views from so many stakeholders have gone into this member's bill (3,379 responses to the consultation alone, and over 95% of respondents fully supportive of the proposal).

Timescales / examples of other Bills

The decision by the Committee that Stage 2 cannot be scheduled has been taken 5 weeks before the end of the session. At time of drafting there is a Government Bill at Stage 1 and I assume there is every expectation from the Scottish Government that that Bill will pass. In addition, there is another Member's Bill at Stage 2 where both stages 2 and 3 are scheduled for March with every expectation, given the Parliament's strong support at Stage 1, that it will pass.

Contact: NGBU, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email NGBU@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

There are examples of members bills from last session that demonstrate that the final two stages can certainly still happen within 5 weeks of parliamentary time remaining. In Session 5, three Members' Bills were passed in the final week of parliamentary business. This included the Tied Pubs (Code and Adjudicator) (Scotland) Bill, in which Stage 2 consideration of amendments concluded on 2 March 2021 ahead of Stage 3 proceedings commencing on 23 March 2021; and the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, where Stage 2 proceedings concluded on 23 February 2021 and Stage 3 proceedings taking place on 24 March 2021, the final day of the Session.

Action taken to address Committee's concerns on timing

I consider that the lead committee, whilst it may not have anticipated scrutinising the bill at Stage 2, has the capacity and the time to do so. During the Stage 1 debate on 5 February 2026 (in which the result of the vote was 90 for, 26 against, and 4 abstentions), the Convener asked for amendments to be lodged as soon as possible. The Government and I had been working for some months on amendments, a number of which address key recommendations from the Committee's report and matters raised by Committee members during evidence sessions. These amendments were lodged by the Cabinet Secretary on 10 February 2026, and while other amendments remain under consideration this is the extent of the amendments envisaged at this stage. I have also written to the Committee offering to meet any member to discuss any specific amendments, and my drafters are ready to prepare additional amendments to short timescales.

Committee amendments

I would challenge the point made in the Committee's letter about limited time for evidence taking. The Committee has had since 10 February 2026 to send the lodged amendments to key stakeholders to seek their written views, indeed the Scottish Government has engaged with certain organisations in its deliberations over these amendments. Sending these amendments to these timescales would have provided time for written views and also oral evidence should it have been needed. Indeed, I note there was a suggestion at the meeting on 17 February that the Committee seek written evidence at that time and this was opposed by 4 of the 7 members of the Committee.

The Committee members have also had since immediately after the Stage 1 debate on 5 February to lodge amendments to the Bill to address issues raised in the Stage 1 report. To date only one amendment, from Mark Ruskell MSP, has been lodged to reflect the recommendations in the Committee's report.

If the Committee has concerns in relation to changes required to the Bill, and given the Committee had urged me and the Cabinet Secretary to lodge amendments as quickly as possible, I consider Committee members with concerns on elements of the Bill could do the same. Of course I want to guard against legislation being rushed, as does any parliamentarian, but there are actions that could have been pursued by the Committee to guard against this such as lodging amendments to seek to address its concerns.

Timing / Work Programme

The formal consideration and disposal at Stage 2 of amendments on such a short bill is very likely to only require one meeting, or at most one meeting and then reconvening after chamber business that evening as other committees have done this session.

In relation to the work programme forming the basis of being unable to scrutinise the Bill, I have always understood that consideration of primary legislation is prioritised in committee work programmes.

The work programme for the committee, which I am privy to as a member of the committee, includes work that is not linked to legislation. I of course appreciate the importance of this work but consider that primary legislation could have been prioritised.

I also consider that certain items listed by the Convener as being prioritised over this bill could be scheduled after Stage 2 between 10 March and 26 March, for example the legacy report mentioned in the Convener's letter. I also note that the Committee will conclude work on its report on the Climate Change Plan next week meaning this understandable priority for its scrutiny work will have been formally completed in February.

The Committee at present has a light agenda for 10 March. I consider, if the Bureau is minded to set a stage 2 deadline for the lead committee, that Stage 2 could take place on Tuesday 10 March. This would allow time for written views to be sought on the amendments lodged by the Scottish Government and then formal proceedings to take place on that date. Under Standing Orders that would allow Stage 3 to be scheduled on Wednesday 25 March. If necessary, the Bureau could also consider suspending Standing Orders in order to take the Bill on Tuesday 24 March, one day shy of the usual gap between stages 2 and 3. That said, I am also aware there may be concerns in directing a Committee that has decided it is unable to complete Stage 2 scrutiny to do so.

Other options for Stage 2 scrutiny

I appreciate there are other procedural options available to the Bureau as set out under Standing Orders Rule 9.7.1 which states:

“If the Parliament has agreed to the Bill's general principles, the Parliamentary Bureau shall—

- (a) refer the Bill back to the lead committee to take Stage 2 of the Bill; or
- (b) by motion propose that Stage 2 of the Bill be taken, in whole or in part, by a Committee of the Whole Parliament or a committee or committees other than the lead committee.”

It is of course preferable for the stage 1 lead committee to scrutinise the Bill at stage 2 given the expertise of that Committee on the subject gained at stage 1. To move away from this would be highly unusual. However, in this highly unusual, possibly unprecedented, situation I appreciate this may be necessary and would welcome the Bureau's views on how to resolve this situation to ensure the will of the Parliament in relation to this Bill is respected.

Yours sincerely,

Monica Lennon MSP