



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Willie Rennie
Member of Scottish Parliament, North East Fife

Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

26 July 2022

Our Ref: WR2321

Dear Richard

Re Evidence from Nicola Sturgeon, John Swinney and Keith Brown

I am writing to you following the decision by the Public Audit Committee to invite Derek Mackay, former transport secretary, to give oral evidence to the committee once the Scottish Parliament returns from the summer recess.

While I welcome this decision and the light it may shed on the government's handling of the ferry deal, I would like to urge the committee to go further and invite three more SNP ministers to give oral evidence before the committee.

Those officials are the First Minister, Deputy First Minister John Swinney and former Infrastructure Secretary Keith Brown.

The public have heard from transport officials and shipyard representatives that John Swinney, Keith Brown and Nicola Sturgeon were all involved in the decision to take over Ferguson Marine and to provide it with extensive financial support.

Nicola Sturgeon attended the launch of the Glen Sannox on 21 November 2017, posing for photos in front of the vessel while it still had painted windows. An email chain revealed that Mr Swinney, serving as finance secretary at the time, wanted to be briefed before any final decision about the contract was made. Mr Swinney later confirmed that he approved the budget for the deal. As the infrastructure secretary at the time, Keith Brown was asked to sign off on the deal, while Mr MacKay was off on leave.

Island communities have been sorely let down by the government and they have waited too long for answers. These communities depend on the success of ferry contracts like this one. The committee must push for the answers that these communities deserve to hear.

Yours sincerely

Willie Rennie
Liberal Democrat Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Fife