

20 February 2023

Dear Mr. Carson,

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee Session Meeting February 8, 2023 on Petition PE1951

Our Seas is a coalition of over 130 coastal businesses, community groups, fishermen's organisations and environmental NGOs with an interest in the condition and management of Scotland's inshore waters.

We acknowledge the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee's recent scrutiny of **Petition PE1951: Reinstate inshore coastal limit on the use of dredge and trawl fishing gears** and note its decision to consider a modern coastal limit as part of its wider review of inshore issues. We recognise that the petition was procedurally closed and would like to draw attention to the committee that 26 stakeholders submitted evidence to the Public Petitions Committee in support of the original petition. 10 of the written submissions are from members of this coalition.

Whilst the Petition PE1951 was initiated by The Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation, the restoration of a modern seaward limit is of fundamental importance not only to the members of our coalition, but also to all Scottish coastal communities. The government's lack of action on this issue has alarming implications for the health of our marine environment and fisheries.

We believe that the petitioner made some very good points and highlighted important issues. It would have been extremely helpful if a Marine Scotland Minister were interrogated on these issues. It was worrying that the committee was unaware of Scotland's existing commitments to achieve good environmental status and other commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Kingdom Fisheries Act 2020 as well as their lack of understanding of the scientific evidence, much of which is found within the Scottish Government's own reports, that underpins Scotland's marine health.



As a coalition, we regularly monitor ongoing research on the benthic health of Scottish seabeds and have the utmost respect for the many marine scientists who devote their lives to this. We encourage the committee to speak with these scientists about their research so that they may gain a more in depth understanding of these issues and the evidence that supports the petition. Furthermore, we believe a dedicated evidence-gathering session would help inform the committee and be supported by all sides in the debate.

We look forward to hearing from you and would welcome the opportunity to meet with committee members and Cabinet Secretary this summer to discuss these important issues.

Yours sincerely,

Hayley Wolcott

Coordinator,

Our Seas coalition

On behalf of the 134 members of the Our Seas coalition

1. **Aberdeen Diving Services**
2. **Angling Trust**
3. **Argaty Red Kites**
4. **Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board**
5. **Argyll Fisheries Trust**
6. **Arran EcoSavvy**
7. **Atlantic Diving Services**
8. **Aquatic Life Institute**
9. **Ayr Angling Club**
10. **Beaully District Fisheries Board**
11. **Belfast Lough Sea Angling and Conservation Club**
12. **Berwickshire Marine Reserve**
13. **Black House WaterSports Tiree**
14. **Blue Marine Foundation**
15. **Blue Planet Society**
16. **Blue Ventures**
17. **Carna Conservation Initiative**
18. **Cast Away with Katie Tunn**
19. **Centre for Human Ecology**
20. **Clean Sailors**
21. **Click Book Stay**
22. **Clyde Porpoise**
23. **Coastal Connection**

24. **Coast to Coast Surf School**
25. **Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS)**
26. **Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)**
27. **Conor Ryan Photography**
28. **Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitat (CROMACH)**
29. **Dive and Sea the Hebrides**
30. **East Neuk Seaweeds**
31. **Eigg Environmental Action Group**
32. **Ellon Sub Aqua Club**
33. **Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust**
34. **Ethical Seafood Research**
35. **Fairlie Coastal Trust**
36. **Fauna & Flora International**
37. **58°North Scottish Seaweed**
38. **Findhorn District Salmon Fisheries Board**
39. **Findhorn Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust**
40. **Firth of Forth Lobster Hatchery**
41. **Fish Legal**
42. **Freedom Diving**
43. **Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore**
44. **Friends of the Sound of Jura**
45. **Frogfish Photography**
46. **GalGael Trust**
47. **Heart of Argyll Wildlife**
48. **Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation**
49. **Isle Martin Trust**
50. **James Curley Fly Fishing**
51. **Johnson and Loftus Boat Builders**
52. **Kayak Summer Isles**
53. **Kilchoan Estate**
54. **Kilmarnock Sub Aqua Club**
55. **Knoydart Foundation Ranger Service**
56. **Little Loch Broom Marine Life**
57. **Loch Laxford Shellfish Ltd**
58. **Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association**
59. **Loch Visions**
60. **Lochaber Environmental Group**
61. **Lochnell Oysters**
62. **Low Impact Fishers of Europe**
63. **Mara Fish Restaurant and Deli**
64. **Marine Concern**
65. **Marine Conservation Northern Ireland**
66. **Mikietyyn Ltd Shellfish Merchants**
67. **Mull Charters**
68. **Narwhal Expeditions**
69. **National Trust for Scotland**

70. **The Nature Library**
71. **Northern Ireland Federation of Sea Anglers**
72. Northern Ireland Fly Fishing Association
73. **Nourish Scotland**
74. **Oban Sea School**
75. **Oceana**
76. **Ocean Breeze Marine Services**
77. **Ocean Gives**
78. **Ockran Oysters**
79. **Open Seas**
80. **Orkney Skate Trust**
81. **Otter Lodge B and B**
82. **Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust**
83. **Patagonia**
84. **Phyllis restaurant**
85. **Plastic at Bay**
86. **Project Baseline**
87. **Project Media**
88. **Project Seagrass**
89. **Puffin Dive Centre**
90. **River Eachaig Fisheries Syndicate**
91. **Salmon Aquaculture Reform Network Scotland**
92. **Saltwater Life**
93. **Save Kintyre Seas**
94. **Scotland the Big Picture**
95. **Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation**
96. **Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers**
97. **Scottish Salmon Think Tank**
98. **Scottish Scallop Divers' Association**
99. **Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network**
100. **100.Scottish Sub Aqua Club**
101. **101.Sealife Adventures**
102. **102.Seawilding**
103. **103.Sea Change**
104. **104.SeaDog Charters**
105. **105.Sea Freedom Kayaks**
106. **106.Sea Kayak Argyll and Bute**
107. **107.Sea Shepherd UK**
108. **108.Sea the Change**
109. **109.Shark Guardian**
110. **110.Shark and Skate Citizen Science Scotland**
111. **111.Shellfish Safaris**
112. **112.Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum**
113. **113.Skye Communities for Natural Heritage**
114. **114.Skye Scallop Divers**
115. **115.Snorkel Wild**

- 116. **116.South Skye Seas initiative**
- 117. **117.Staunch Industries**
- 118. **118.SubSeaTV**
- 119. **119.Sunny Side Ocean Defenders**
- 120. **120.Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust**
- 121. **121.Terra Mare**
- 122. **122.That's Yer Dinner**
- 123. **123.The Ullapool Sea Savers**
- 124. **124.The Wilderness Foundation UK**
- 125. **125.University of Stirling Marine Conservation Society**
- 126. **126.Ullapool Charters**
- 127. **127.Ullapool OutDoors**
- 128. **128.West Coast Matters**
- 129. **129.West Sutherland Fisheries trust**
- 130. **130.Wild Argyll**
- 131. **131.WildFish**
- 132. **132.Wild Rose Escapes**
- 133. **133.Wreckspeditions**
- 134. **134.WRASFB - Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board**