



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

Robbie Kernahan
Director of Green Economy
NatureScot

20 May 2025

Dear Robbie,

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

Thank you for giving evidence to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee on Wednesday 30 April as part of our scrutiny of Part 4 of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1.

As you will recall, there were a number of points throughout our discussion in which you and Donald Fraser committed to write to the Committee in order to provide us with follow-up answers. I have noted these points below for your convenience:

1. In response to a question from Tim Eagle MSP, Donald Fraser agreed to provide further information on the figures and criteria used in the financial memorandum to benchmark costs of implementation and regulation, especially in terms of predicting the number of times NatureScot would intervene under the new powers provided in the Bill.
2. When discussing the provisions in relation to the register for authorised persons, you committed to provide data to the Committee on how many stalkers in Scotland are already DSC level 1 qualified. You also agreed to come back to the Committee with further information on the authorisation process, in terms of someone being on the register who does not have the DSC1 qualification.
3. You agreed to outline what preparatory work was being undertaken by NatureScot in developing the Code of Practice in order to reflect the proposed new powers. It would also be helpful if you could set out your expectations of the timetable for revising the Code of Practice.

In addition, the Committee would welcome clarification from NatureScot regarding a number of further questions that were highlighted by deer management stakeholders at our roundtable discussion on 30 April.

4. Stakeholders asked for an explanation of why NatureScot should be added to advisory panels, rather than acting as an observer on them or operating independently of them entirely.
5. Stakeholders raised a need for clarity on when section 6ZB may be used to intervene and at what timescales, with case studies acting as a guide. Stakeholders also wanted clarity as to which plans and targets would be relevant to section 6ZB.
6. Stakeholders asked for an explanation of the reasons behind proposals in the Bill to change timescales for making objections from 28 days to 14 and reducing the standard notice period for entry onto land from 14 working days to 5.

On behalf of the Committee, I request a response to the above questions by **Thursday 29 May**.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Finlay Carson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener

**Contact: Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.
Email: rural.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL
through Contact Scotland BSL.**