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Good afternoon,

I am writing to notify both the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, and the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee of the recently launched Scottish Government public consultation on the regulation of fish and shellfish farm deposits.

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands wrote to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee on the 23rd September 2025, providing an interim update on activities in response to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee report on 'Salmon Farming in Scotland'.

The letter included an update to note that a public consultation on proposals to identify SEPA as the responsible authority for fish farm discharges between 3-12 nautical miles was due be launched in September 2025. I can confirm that the consultation was launched on Wednesday 24th September 2025, and will run for a 12 week period, closing on 16 December 2025. The consultation can be viewed at the following webpage - [Regulation of fish and shellfish farm deposits: consultation - gov.scot](#)

We are notifying both the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, and the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, as the consultation proposals relate to the work of both Committees, namely the RAI Committee's consideration of aquaculture policy, and the NZET Committee's consideration of environmental policy, including the role of SEPA.

The consultation is seeking views on the following proposals:

- Identification of SEPA as the responsible authority for regulation of fish farm environmental discharges between 3-12 nautical miles, via amendment to The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018

- Amendment to the Marine Licence Exempted Activities Order, to extend the existing exemption on requirements for marine licensing of deposit of “substance” from fish farms from 3 nautical out to 12 nautical miles.
- Amendment to the Marine Licence Exempted Activities Order, to clarify the scope of the existing exemption for the deposit of fish and shellfish farm equipment.

Both Committees will be updated in regards to Ministers’ decisions on whether to take forward these proposals following the close of the consultation and subsequent analysis of the responses received.

Yours sincerely

Joe Triscott

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