



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

Mairi Gougeon
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government

6 March 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Water Environment (Shellfish Water Protected Areas: Designation) (Scotland) Order 2026 (SSI 2026/57)

I am writing in relation to the above Scottish Statutory Instrument which was considered by the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee at our meeting on Wednesday 4 March.

The Committee agreed to make no recommendation in relation to the instrument. However, we agreed to write to you to request further clarity on a number of points pertaining to the proposed Shellfish Water Protection Areas (SWPAS) designated by the Scottish Government.

Firstly, it would be helpful if you could respond to concerns highlighted in the Scottish Government's consultation from:

- **Shetlands Islands Council**, regarding the de-designation of certain sites and the potential economic consequences for the mussel industry in Shetland.
- **Seafood Shetland**, regarding a perceived lack of robust monitoring of SWPAs by SEPA as per its statutory requirements.

In addition, the Committee would welcome further information on:

- What discussions have taken place between the Scottish Government and small inshore fishers to make them aware of any changes to SWPAs; and
- How the Scottish Government intends to support any local fishers that have been displaced as a result of changes to SWPAs.

On behalf of the Committee, I request a reply to these points by **18 March**.

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.

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