Dear Rob,

I am writing to update you on the new conservation measures proposed for the Scottish marine environment in relation to existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

I wrote to the Committee on 24 July 2014 to inform you of my decision to designate 30 MPAs. Scottish Government subsequently consulted on the associated management measures for 20 sites which also included some existing Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Following feedback from stakeholders, a further consultation was undertaken on the proposed measures in four of the larger MPAs to allow additional stakeholders representations.

In response to that consultation, as well as feedback from the Committee following the stakeholder evidence session, I am today announcing further changes to three specific sites - Small Isles, Wester Ross, and Loch Sunart to the Sound of Jura – that will reduce any potential economic impact while still protecting the integrity of our initial proposals and my objective to protect and conserve the marine environment for future generations.

A further consultation period on these Orders begins today and will run until 18 January 2016.


The measures for South Arran and the sites that are in the omnibus fisheries Order remain unchanged. I have also determined the final measures for the Luce Bay and Sands SAC. These three Orders are being laid in Parliament to take effect on 08 February 2016.
To help minimise any local impact I have announced a three point plan including:

- An environmental monitoring strategy, including opportunities for fishing vessels to participate with funding of up to £500,000 over 3 years.
- Resources for diversification will be an early priority for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.
- A commitment to undertake a robust economic study in a year’s time to assess the impact on coastal communities.

Further information on all the proposals can be found here: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/MPAMGT/protectedareasmgt

Richard Lochhead

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