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Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

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12 January 2024

Dear Edward

Land Reform Bill and draft Climate Change Plan

Thank you for your letter of 19 December 2023 in which you sought an update from me on the Scottish Government's anticipated timings for introduction of the Land Reform Bill and laying of the draft Climate Change Plan.

It is always my wish to work as constructively with the Parliament as possible, particularly in order to help aid your future work programming.

Firstly, the introduction of the Land Reform Bill remains a Programme for Government commitment for 2023-24, and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands has asked officials to keep your clerks updated on progress towards introduction in line with usual Bill processes.

Secondly, we are continuing to develop climate policies which ensure our transition to net zero is fair and just for everyone, and remain fully committed to bringing forward a draft of the next Climate Change Plan, covering the period 2025 to 2040.

As noted by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition when she wrote to the Chair of the Conveners Group on 19 December, whilst it was regrettably not possible to produce a draft by our own November deadline, we will progress in line with statutory deadlines. Under the terms of section 35 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, the deadline for laying a final Plan in Parliament covering the period 2025 to 2040 is 23 March 2025. Also under the terms of that Act, we must allow 120 days for Parliamentary scrutiny of a draft (of which no fewer than 60 must be days on which the Parliament is not dissolved or in recess). Therefore, the legal deadline for laying a draft of our Plan is not until the latter part of 2024.

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The Cabinet Secretary looks forward to keeping Parliament well informed of our progress in this regard, as we seek to firm up dates for laying the draft this year.

Both my own officials, and the relevant policy officials, will continue to liaise with your clerks as appropriate as work on both of these continues to progress and my ministerial colleagues will be in touch with you directly when relevant decisions have been taken and updates can be provided. I am pleased to note that the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity has already advised you that the committee will be provided with a copy of the Scottish Government's draft Circular Economy and Waste Route Map, which was referenced in your letter, this month.

I am copying this to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition and the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity.

Kind regards

GEORGE ADAM

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