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Edward Mountain MSP

Convener

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

By email: [netzero.committee@Parliament.scot](mailto:netzero.committee@Parliament.scot)

17 January 2024

Dear Edward,

## Appointments to the Scottish Land Commission

Thank you for your letter dated 22 December 2023 on the recent appointments to the Scottish Land Commission (SLC), and I am grateful to the Committee for its involvement in the scrutiny process. As I am sure you will appreciate, I can only speak to the process involving the Scottish Government and have set that out below.

I was first made aware of the names of the candidates recommended by the appointment panel on 23 November 2023, in a submission requesting my approval for the recommendations. In accordance with 5.8 of the Ministerial Code, the Chair appointment also requires the approval of the First Minister, who was copied into the same submission on 23 November.

I wrote to the Committee on 29 November with the names of the nominees, and officials in the Public Appointments Team (PAT) provided a courtesy update to all candidates on 4 December to thank them for attending the interview, and that the Committee had indicated that they would consider the appointments on 12 December.

Following the Committee's consideration on 12 December, PAT officials informed all candidates of the outcome on the morning of 13 December, with the recommended candidates updated on the next steps of the process, and that their names were likely to be made public following the publication of the Committee's report, and in the motion.

It was of course open to any of the candidates who applied for, and whose applications were taken forward by the panel, to consider what appointment might mean for any other appointments they might hold, at any point in the appointment process. But as I am sure you will appreciate that is a matter for them, and indeed any person who applies for a public appointment.

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Following discussions between officials and Clerks, the Committee published all correspondence relating to the appointments on its website on 18 December, their report on 19 December, and the motion recommending approval was lodged in Parliament for debate on 21 December. Following the parliamentary debate, the Scottish Government issued a press release to confirm the approval of the proposed Chair and two Land Commissioners.

I hope this provides the reassurance you are seeking and I would reiterate my thanks to the Committee and its staff for their contribution to this appointments process.

Yours sincerely,

**MAIRI GOUGEON**

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