



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Public Audit Committee

Michelle Quinn
Interim Director-General Net Zero
Scottish Government

15 November 2024

Dear Ms Quinn

The 2022/23 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland

At its meeting of 14 November 2024, the Public Audit Committee considered correspondence¹ received in relation to its scrutiny of the above section 22 report by the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS).

The Committee agreed to write to you to seek information in relation to the international work undertaken by the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) to support the Scottish Government's Hydro Nation Strategy

During the evidence session on 19 September 2024, you confirmed to the Committee that—

“The hydro nation work is currently paused. Over the coming months, we will take a view on whether that work will proceed and, if so, how it will be best delivered. That will be considered in the round alongside all the other activity that is being undertaken. However, as I said, at present, our firm priority is stabilising the organisation and bringing the best-value approach to the stewardship of public funds”.

The Committee welcomes the pause on Hydro Nation work to prioritise the stabilisation of WICS. The Committee seeks information on how the Scottish Government plans to assess whether WICS's international work to support the Hydro Nation Strategy should resume, including the factors it will take into account and the timescale for a decision to be made.

The Committee also requests information on what assessment the Scottish Government has made in relation to the effectiveness of, and outcomes arising

¹ [Submission from Alan Sutherland](#), 4 November 2024, [Submission from Scottish Government](#), 6 November 2024 and [Submission from WICS](#), 6 November 2024.

Contact: Public Audit Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.
Email: publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

from WICS's international activities to support the Hydro Nation Strategy. This includes information on any feedback that has been sought from WICS's international partners.

At its meeting on 14 November 2024, the Committee was also sighted on the recent reviews of WICS published by the Scottish Government on 7 November 2024. The Committee notes that information on who carried out the [Independent Review of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland - Governance Arrangements](#) does not appear to be contained in the report.

The Committee requests confirmation of the author of the Independent Review of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland – Governance Arrangements.

The Committee requests a response by **13 December 2024**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Leonard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Richard Leonard MSP
Convener**