



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

rural.committee@parliament.scot

By email only

23 May 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill

As you will be aware, the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee made a number of recommendations relating to the proposed rural support plan in our [stage 1 report](#).

In relation to these recommendations, in [your response to our report](#), you stated “I will in particular consider carefully whether or not to bring forward any of the suggested amendments and will update the committee on those considerations ahead of Stage 2”. We did not receive an update, such as you undertook to provide, in advance of Stage 2.

During the [Stage 2 proceedings on 8 May](#), you set out your “intention to come back to the Parliament at Stage 3 with a more suitable framing of the planned requirements to cover a wide range of the issues that were raised at Stage 1, as well as issues that have been raised by stakeholders, including on the monitoring and evaluation process”. You later told us this would “be important in setting the scene for a reporting period and giving everyone a clear understanding of what we are doing, why we are doing it and what we are seeking to achieve from the activity and support”.

It would be helpful if you could write to the Committee, when you have finalised your Stage 3 amendments relating to the rural support plan, to provide an updated response to our Stage 1 report. It would also be helpful if you could provide this in sufficient time to give the Committee, and the Parliament, the opportunity to reflect fully on the reasoning underpinning your proposals in advance of Stage 3.

Yours sincerely,

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener