



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

10 May 2024

By email only

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Interim Scottish crab and lobster management measures

I am writing following concerns raised with the Committee relating to the [interim measures relating to crab and lobster management highlighted in the Marine Directorate blog on 3 May 2024](#).

It would be helpful if you could provide further information relating to the following—

- reasons for the introduction of the interim measures and the aims of the “controls on creel fishing vessels of more than 12 meters overall with a track record of landing more than 200 tonnes of crab and/or lobster in any 12 month period since 2020”;
- the powers under which these interim measures will be introduced;
- how the interim measures will be enforced;
- the available penalties for failure to comply with the interim measures;
- how long the interim measures will be in place for;
- the stakeholder engagement, both before and after the decision to introduce the interim measures was made, and whether the affected fishers were provided with full details of the vessel licence condition before publication on the Scottish Government’s website on 10 May;
- whether the licence condition will only apply to Scottish vessels and if so, whether the Scottish Government has requested the other UK vessel licensing authorities implement licence conditions on their vessels to ensure alignment with the interim measures;
- what impact assessments were carried out into the effect of the interim measures on individual fishers, particularly in those areas where no stock assessments have been carried out;

- whether the Marine Directorate has any plans to update the scientific assessments (which appear to span 2016-2019) on which these measures are based and, if so, the timescale for this and whether this will address data gaps in the Solway Firth;
- how the effectiveness of the measures will be monitored and evaluated;
- whether effort (creel) limits were considered as an alternative approach and, if so, why this approach was not preferred;
- whether – if the decision is taken to make the interim measures permanent – this would be implemented by subordinate legislation to allow parliamentary scrutiny of this decision; and
- the “overarching improvement roadmap to inshore fisheries management in Scotland” and “related key transformational projects” referred to in the Marine Directorate blog and to what extent these will be informed by the evaluation of inshore fisheries pilots.

Given these interim measures come into effect from 12 May 2024, it would be helpful if you could provide a response by Friday 24 May 2024.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Finlay Carson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee