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Convener, Rural Affairs, Island and Natural
Environment Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
The Scottish Parliament
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11 July 2022

Dear Finlay,

Aquatic Animal Health (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Thank you for your letter, dated 30 June 2022, consenting to the provisions set out in the notification being included in UK, rather than Scottish, subordinate legislation as regards the above proposed UK statutory instrument (SI).

The Committee asked for further information about how any disputes between the three UK administrations over amendments to relevant lists would be resolved.

Amendments made to the compartments and zones list – relating to the particular species of aquaculture animals permitted entry from third countries and territories into GB – will be agreed through the Aquatic Animal Health policy Group (AAHPG), or where consensus cannot be reached, through the Animal Disease Policy Group (ADPG) as the decision-making bodies of the Common UK Animal Health and Welfare Framework.

As with any GB Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) import decisions, decisions relating to the amending of this list will be science-based, as required under the UK Government's various trade agreements and under World Trade Organisation rules. These decisions are always made on a GB or UK-wide basis informed by the recommendations of the AAHPG.

AAHPG is the formal strategic policy forum for UK-wide aquatic animal health issues representing the UK, Scottish, Northern Ireland and Welsh governments. It identifies and explores issues relating to aquatic animal health, trade and certification, disease control strategies and EU Exit related challenges. ADPG is a cross-governmental body that includes the Chief Veterinary Officers of the four UK administrations, including that of the Scottish Government, alongside the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, the Animal and Plant Health Agency and other relevant bodies.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



Decision making fora and dispute resolution processes are set out in Annex 2 of the [Animal Health and Welfare Common Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk). Ultimately, where agreement is needed but cannot be reached an issue may be escalated, via the Senior DA Official Programme Board, to the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) and appropriate intergovernmental processes.

Given the imperative of maintaining biosecurity and the GB Health Zone status, we envisage dispute resolution rarely being needed, but a system is in place should it be necessary.

I hope this provides reassurance to the Committee.

Yours Sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON