



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Edward Mountain MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Highlands and Islands Region

Finlay Carson MSP,
Convener of the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

6 September 2022

Dear Finlay

As you will be aware, in 2018 the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee concluded its inquiry into Salmon Farming in Scotland with an extensive report which included a total 65 recommendations of where the sector should make improvements.

At the time of the inquiry, the sector appeared to be struggling to address the multiple challenges of controlling of sea lice, lowering fish mortality rates and reducing the sector's impact on the environment. Importantly, the committee was strongly of the view that the status quo in terms of regulation and enforcement was unacceptable, and that the bar needed to be raised by setting enhanced and more effective standards.

However, in the years since the inquiry, it would appear that the industry has been unable to address many of the issues raised in the REC Committee's report, especially the fish mortality rates which are increasing at an alarming rate. To illustrate this, I have provided a summary below of the mortality data, sourced from Aquaculture Scotland ([link here](#)):

| Year | Fish Farm Mortalities (kg) |
|------|----------------------------|
| 2021 | 29,958,552 |
| 2020 | 27,368,508 |
| 2019 | 25,771,983 |
| 2018 | 16,573,210 |
| 2017 | 25,443,536 |
| 2016 | 22,239,861 |

These figures alone question whether enough progress is being made by salmon producers to ensure their farming methods are responsible, sustainable, and meeting the recommendations set out in the REC Committee's report.

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With that in mind, I wonder if it would be appropriate for the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee to consider a review of the Salmon Farming industry's actions since 2018 as part of its upcoming work programme.

I would also like to make you aware of my entry in the register of interests, which show that I am a co-owner of a wild salmon fishery. The salmon fishery is on the River Spey, on the east coast of Scotland. The migration routes for smolts leaving the river and salmon returning to the river are along the east coast, where there is no significant salmon farming that could affect those fish. Thus, salmon farming has no impact on my registered interests as a salmon fishing proprietor.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Edward Mountain MSP
Representing the Highlands and Islands

