



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Edward Mountain MSP
Convenor of the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: MM/REC
16 August 2018

Dear Edward,

On 9 November 2017, Humza Yousaf MSP, the then Minister for Transport and the Islands, wrote to you attaching a letter he had received from Jim McColl, the Chair of Clyde Blowers Capital, the company behind Ferguson Marine Engineering Ltd (FMEL). In his letter, Mr McColl explained that there had been delays to the construction of two new ferries ordered by Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) for the CalMac Ferries fleet and that the first of these, the MV Glen Sannox, would be delivered in Winter 2018-19.

On 19 July 2018, I responded to a Parliamentary Question from Colin Smyth MSP (PQ S5W-17382) stating that:

“Ferguson Marine Engineering Ltd (FMEL) have notified Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) of delays to the construction of these new vessels. A revised delivery programme is currently being discussed by FMEL and CMAL. We will inform Parliament when revised timescales have been agreed in the next few weeks.

“Following delivery, CalMac Ferries Ltd require around two months for trials and crew familiarisation before each vessel is fully deployed on the Clyde and Hebrides ferry network.”

FMEL has now advised that the first vessel, the MV Glen Sannox, will be delivered during Summer 2019 and the second vessel in Spring 2020. In each case, as explained in the reply to Colin Smyth, a further two months are required by CalMac before the vessels are fully deployed.

Clearly this further delay is disappointing particularly for the island communities awaiting the arrival of these new ships. However Members will be aware of the significant investment that has gone into transforming the shipyard, preserving jobs and expanding training

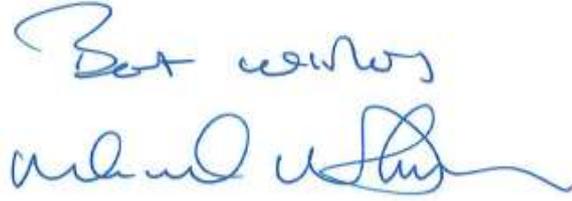
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opportunities in Inverclyde since it was acquired by FMEL. I hope in due course to have an opportunity to visit the shipyard myself and to see these vessels under construction.

The Scottish Government remains strongly committed to both our lifeline ferry services and to our industrial base. I will continue to keep the relevant Parliamentary committee informed of progress with these shipbuilding projects.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Best wishes' followed by a stylized signature.

Michael Matheson

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