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Convener, Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
Committee

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Dear convener,

## ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE

I would like to provide the Committee with an update on the *Environment Strategy for Scotland*, which will see its first annual report on progress being laid in the Parliament today.

As you will know, the Environment Strategy for Scotland creates an overarching framework for Scotland's strategies and plans on the environment and climate change. It forms part of our strategic approach to environmental policy after EU Exit, alongside new arrangements for environmental principles and governance, and it sits alongside high-level Scottish Government policy frameworks, including the new National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, the National Transport Strategy and the National Planning Framework.

*The Environment Strategy for Scotland: Vision and Outcomes*, published in February 2020, set out an ambitious, long-term vision for Scotland's natural environment and our role in tackling the global climate and nature crises. It also identified the outcomes on which we will focus as we work to deliver this vision. The strategy recognises that adapting to live, and thrive, within the planet's sustainable limits will require transformative changes across our economy and society; but that in doing so, we can transform our country for the better – helping to build a stronger, more resilient economy, tackling inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of Scotland's people.



An *Initial Monitoring Framework* for the Environment Strategy was published in February 2021, outlining the initial selection of high-level indicators that will be used to track progress towards the strategy's outcomes and identifying areas where work will need to be undertaken to explore indicators as the monitoring framework is further developed. A website for reporting on the framework was launched in November 2021, to update on the status and performance of the indicators and on the progress in delivering the strategy's outcomes.

The UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021 ("the Continuity Act") requires Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish an environmental policy strategy and to have due regard to it when developing policies. You will recall that this requirement flowed from an amendment proposed by Liz Smith MSP. Provisions in section 47 of the Continuity Act require a progress report to be submitted to the Parliament annually until a strategy is completed.

The first annual report on progress describes the work already undertaken to develop the Environment Strategy, including the publication of the vision and outcomes, and monitoring framework. The report outlines how the development of the strategy will fulfil the requirements in the Continuity Act, which allow for existing progress to form a part of the environmental policy strategy. The report also sets out how the strategy will continue to influence policy development across Government as we strive to deliver our long term vision for Scotland's environment.



**MÀIRI MCALLAN**

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