



**NatureScot**  
**NàdarAlba**

Scotland's Nature Agency  
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

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Net Zero, Energy & Transport Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

03 November 2022

Dear ██████

#### NZET FOLLOW-UP FROM MEETING 25 OCTOBER 2022

I agreed at the meeting to follow up on some points raised by Liam Kerr in relation to a sewage spill at Loch Leven.

We have been working with partners, including Perth and Kinross Council, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH), SEPA and local stakeholders to improve the water quality at Loch Leven for nearly thirty years and good progress has been made (see [case study](#) for more information).

Unfortunately this kind of pollution could have a serious impact on the important habitats of the loch, its aquatic vegetation and wildlife, and so we are working with SEPA and Scottish Water to investigate the incident and continue to monitor its impact on the ground.

Loch Leven has been the subject of intensive research and pollution monitoring. This has shown that phosphorous bound up in sediments associated with land use is the main source of nutrients, but any additional nutrients entering the loch, such as this, are likely to remain there and be reactivated in the water during stormy conditions. Climate change is leading to increased storm events, and the increase in heavy rainfall is exacerbating the problem of storm tank overflow at the Kinross sewage works.

Pollution is identified as one of the five direct drivers of global biodiversity loss (IPBES, 2019) and tackling it is necessary to address the nature and climate crisis. The forthcoming 25-year Scottish Biodiversity Strategy will set out the ambition for nature restoration, and the importance of joining actions to tackle both the nature and climate crises. The incident at Loch Leven is an example of something which is both damaging to biodiversity interests and reflects an inadequate response to an extreme weather event. We must avoid such situations or we will fail to halt the loss of biodiversity witnessed over decades.

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SEPA's River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027 acknowledges the need to keep excess rainwater out of sewer systems. This is particularly important as rainfall patterns are changing across Scotland as a result of climate change. We have therefore supported retrofitting separate run off and foul water drainage systems in older housing stock in our response to NPF4. Spills are also caused by blockages and we have actively supported Scottish Water's Nature Calls campaign <https://www.nature.scot/nature-calls-how-changing-our-habits-helps-water-and-wildlife-brian-lironi-scottish-water>.

Yours sincerely,

John Kerr

Operations Manager – Protected Areas, Innovation and Data

