



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Màiri McAllan MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net
Zero and Just Transition
Scottish Government

**Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Committee**
c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email only

netzero.committee@parliament.scot

30 June 2023

Dear Màiri,

Development and Implementation of Marine Plans in Scotland

The Session 5 Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee published a report in December 2020 regarding [the development and implementation of marine plans in Scotland](#).

The [Protocol between the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government in relation to the handling of Committee business](#) states the Scottish Government should usually respond to Committee reports within 2 months.

In March 2021, the then Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment [wrote](#) to the ECCLR Committee and said a response would be provided to the successor Committee. He said—

On that related point, I have also asked officials to ensure that a full response to the inquiry findings is provided to the relevant successor Committee. You will recall that Marine Scotland was conducting an internal review to inform this response, that review is nearing completion and should therefore support a response to the inquiry recommendations in the early course of the next Parliamentary term.

The Session 6 Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee has marine planning within its remit and as such we have been anticipating a response to the ECCLR Committee report.

On [27 September 2022](#), Liam Kerr asked the then Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport about the lack of a response. He replied that the Scottish Government had intended to respond to the report with its work on a new marine plan, but this was delayed. He committed to ensure a response was received as part of this work.

On [27 June 2023](#), the Committee heard from you about your priorities in your new role as Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition. Again, we asked when the response to the report will be provided. You said—

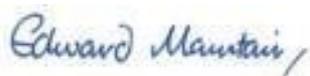
I acknowledge the length of time that has passed since the report's publication. We are working on our final response, which I am hoping will be published in due course.

The Committee recognises that there has been considerable interest and indeed some controversy around marine planning in recent months (and, in that connection, we note yesterday's announcement on highly protected marine areas). But two-and-a-half years is not an acceptable timeframe for a response to a Parliamentary committee's report. It is past time for the response, and I suggest that allowing you six weeks from the date of this letter should be adequate in terms of allowing that response to finally be received.

I would be grateful for a reply at your soonest convenience indicating that the Scottish Government is able to provide a formal response by 10 August.

If your formal response to the ECCLR Committee's report also sets out how you intend to progress environmental protections in marine areas that too would be welcome.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Mountain".

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee