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

2 November 2022

Dear Finlay,

The Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2022 (SSI 2022/262)

Thank you for your letter of 6 October 2022 with a number of follow-up questions relating to the Committee's consideration of the above negative instrument which was discussed at its meeting on 5 October 2022.

I would like to clarify that the rabies testing process in itself has not faced a backlog, rather the significant number of pets entering Great Britain from Ukraine has put pressure on quarantine facilities and the ELISA test has been used to relieve this pressure by reducing the time animals would be required to spend in quarantine. There are approximately 200 pending applications, most of which have been processed by Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) but are awaiting arrival dates or further information to be added to their application. At present, quarantine facilities across Great Britain have good capacity to cope with the expected arrival numbers.

APHA have reported that the number of new applications being received has reduced significantly. In addition, they have advised that the number of arrivals requiring the ELISA test has also reduced because the animals have already completed the full health preparations required for entry. If these positive signs continue, then we do not anticipate that the time period permitting the use of the ELISA test will need to be extended again. However, APHA have reported slight increases in the number of applications that they receive which coincide with intensifying fighting in Ukraine. Although at the moment these increases are small, if the situation were to deteriorate significantly in the coming months then there could be a need to extend the time period.

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We will continue to monitor the situation closely and if it looks like an extension to the time period permitting the use of the ELISA test is required then we will endeavour to ensure that any future instruments will not breach the 28 day rule. I fully acknowledge the difficulties that breaching the 28 day rule poses in terms of Parliamentary scrutiny, and regret that it was not possible to comply with this requirement for this instrument.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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