

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 13 November 2017 15:35  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Cc:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Wild Seaweed Harvesting Update

[Redacted]

HIE have spoken with SAMS and secured an update that does include some mapping outlooks. I still await the details but the initial findings look encouraging with estimate of kelp around 18m tonnes (we had expected around 10m) and several suitable harvesting areas.

The Scottish Seaweed Industry Association are pleased with the revised findings.

I will provide a further update as soon as I can.

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Sent:** 13 November 2017 15:01  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted] Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Subject:** Wild Seaweed Harvesting Update

[Redacted]

Mr Ewing has noted and agrees with you [Redacted]

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | [Redacted] the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity | [Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 10 November 2017 15:05  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Cc:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Wild Seaweed Harvesting Update

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] To ensure there is a clear understanding across Marine Scotland about the handling of Licence applications for seaweed harvesting and the importance of re-establishing the industry in Scotland, [REDACTED] is arranging a meeting of the key players within MS as a priority. We may also subsequently meet with Crown Estates Scotland and SNH.

Once we have met with MS colleagues, it would be helpful if [REDACTED] and I can meet with Mr Ewing to provide an update on the arrangements that will be put in place going forward.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

marine scotland:

Fisheries Division

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] on behalf of Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism  
**Sent:** 05 November 2015 11:31  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
Constitution and Economy; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment  
**Cc:** Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism; Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; DG Enterprise, Environment & Innovation; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Commercial Seaweed Harvesting in Scotland: MBL

[REDACTED],

Many thanks for copying us into your submission.

Mr Ewing has commented that it seems like this approach provides a fair basis upon which to proceed and he would hope that this could be agreed as swiftly as possible.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PS/ Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism  
[REDACTED]

 Save (a bit of) a tree...please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 November 2015 12:27  
**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment  
**Cc:** Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism; Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; DG Enterprise, Environment & Innovation; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Commercial Seaweed Harvesting in Scotland: MBL

PS/Deputy First Minister  
PS/Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Please see attached advice from [REDACTED] providing an update on the issues arising for one company keen to exploit wild stocks of seaweed and clarify the consenting mechanism in the absence of a clear regulatory framework. This should be read in conjunction with the more general advice on seaweed harvesting in my submission also of today's date.

<< File: Commercial seaweed harvesting in scotland MBL.DOCX >>

Best regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Marine Scotland – Marine Planning & Strategy

[Redacted]

Tel: [Redacted]

Mob: [Redacted]

Fax: [Redacted]

e: [email](#) [Redacted]

w: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/marinescotland>

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED] on behalf of Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy  
**Sent:** 24 August 2018 10:21  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** News Desk; [REDACTED] Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [REDACTED] Gray H (Helena); [REDACTED] Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy; [REDACTED] Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; [REDACTED] Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment; Palmer MR (Mike); Cabinet Secretariat inbox; Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans; Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform  
**Subject:** URGENT - Cab Sec ECCLR Brief - seaweed harvesting - 13 Aug 2018  
**Importance:** High

[REDACTED]

Mr Ewing would appreciate a note for the travelling Cabinet on Monday on the west coast kelp issue as it has been attracting a lot of interest.

Grateful if a one page brief can be sent to Private Office by 3pm today

Thanks

[REDACTED] | Deputy Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy | [REDACTED]

Please check our Ministerial Preferences <http://saltire/my-workplace/ministerial-preferences-and-support/Environment-and-Rural-Economy/Pages/Fergus-Ewing.aspx>

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***Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)***

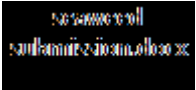
[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 03 November 2015 12:21  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment  
**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy; Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism; DG Enterprise, Environment & Innovation; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Routine - Submission - Seaweed Harvesting Update

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Please see attached submission on seaweed harvesting.



Best regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Marine Scotland – Marine Planning & Strategy

[Redacted]

Tel: [Redacted]  
Mob: [Redacted]  
Fax: [Redacted]  
e: [email \[Redacted\]](mailto:[Redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) Scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
w: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/marinescotland>

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 03 November 2015 12:27  
**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment  
**Cc:** Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism; Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; DG Enterprise, Environment & Innovation; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Commercial Seaweed Harvesting in Scotland: MBL

PS/Deputy First Minister  
PS/Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Please see attached advice from [Redacted] providing an update on the issues arising for one company keen to exploit wild stocks of seaweed and clarify the consenting mechanism in the absence of a clear regulatory framework. This should be read in conjunction with the more general advice on seaweed harvesting in my submission also of today's date.



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Best regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Marine Scotland – Marine Planning & Strategy

Scottish Government | [Redacted]

Tel: [Redacted]  
Mob: [Redacted]  
Fax: [Redacted]  
e: [email](mailto:[Redacted]) [Redacted] Scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
w: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/marinescotland>

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

## **COMMERCIAL SEAWEED HARVESTING IN SCOTLAND: PROGRESS TO REGULATE INDUSTRY**

### **Purpose**

To update you on the progress to establish a regulatory framework to support the sustainable development of the commercial seaweed industry.

### **Priority**

Routine – this submission is to update the Cabinet Secretary on progress.

### **Background**

- The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced a licensing regime to regulate activity in the Scottish marine area. However this does not include direct provision for seaweed harvesting at a commercial scale.
- The UK currently has no large-scale cultivation of seaweed, but Scotland has a few small-scale seaweed growers and wild harvesters. The seaweed harvesting sector has recently indicated aspirations to develop large-scale wild seaweed harvesting around the coasts of Scotland.
- Marine Scotland has received 3 enquiries from organisations who may wish to undertake commercial harvest of wild seaweed in Scotland, with MBL being the most advanced of these. A number of general enquiries relating to smaller scale harvesting have also been received. Linda Rosborough's submission of 3 November provides further advice on a possible approach to MBL.
- Large scale mechanical extraction of wild seaweed, in particular kelp forests, is a new project and the environmental impacts are not known. To better understand these impacts Marine Scotland has initiated a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of wild seaweed harvesting to investigate the potential environmental and cumulative impacts. The SEA will provide an evidence base to inform regulatory decisions. The Draft SEA screening report is set out in **Annex B**.
- SNH and SEPA are fully in agreement with us that this SEA is a necessary step in progress to establish a regulatory framework.

### **Current Scottish Policy Framework**

- At present to harvest wild seaweed an agreement with the relevant landowner (such as The Crown Estate) is required. If harvesting is proposed within a Site of



Special Scientific Interest where seaweed is (or supports) one of the protected features, a license from SNH is required.

- The Scottish Government has indicated its support for the sustainable growth of the seaweed sector through the National Marine Plan, adopted in March 2015, which identified that there are opportunities to grow Scottish seaweed production, primarily through cultivation in the sea.
- Scottish Ministers consulted on a draft seaweed policy statement in 2013 which included an SEA. The purpose of the SEA was to inform the development of the draft Seaweed Policy Statement, i.e. the cultivation of seaweed through aquaculture and its use in Integrated Multi-Tropic Aquaculture systems. As part of this wild seaweed harvesting was touched on. At that time the data available indicated that most harvesting was happening at a small scale, the report noted that at this small scale there was no evidence of adverse environmental effects. However the report also cautioned that if we saw an increase in activity particularly at a larger scale then we could see adverse environmental effects.
- Several respondents raised concerns about the potential environmental effects of wild seaweed harvesting in response to the consultation.
- Several countries have adopted protocols and/or regulations to address sustainability and environmental concerns held over wild harvesting. Further information on these is set out at **Annex C**.

## **Key Issues**

### **1. Environmental Considerations**

Seaweeds play an important role in supporting marine biodiversity by providing widespread and complex habitats and niches for a large number of marine species. Wild seaweed harvesting activities may have widespread implications for marine ecosystems and may also affect ecosystem services. A diagram at **Annex A** highlights these issues. The following impacts of seaweed harvesting could have serious environmental consequences:

- loss of habitat and/or shelter for a range of plants and animals, alongside loss of direct and indirect food sources. As well as detrital grazers, suspension feeders et al, this has consequences for higher trophic levels, e.g. mammals, birds and piscivorous fish.
- loss of nursery grounds for juvenile invertebrates and fish, with consequences for higher trophic levels and commercial fish stocks.
- loss of the physical modification effects of seaweed, e.g. wave damping, which may result in increases in coastal erosion and/or flooding events.
- loss of carbon sink provided by seaweed species.

The key issue is the sustainability of any seaweed harvest. At this point we are unable to assess what the sustainable level might be and have begun an SEA to address this issue. Without sustainability any jobs would be short-lived.

## **2. Marine Licensing**

As stated above the Marine (Scotland) Act does not contain a clear provision for us to directly license commercial seaweed harvesting. To put this issue beyond any doubt we would suggest using a secondary legislation provision.

## **3. Stakeholders**

Stakeholders will play a key role in the development of the SEA through the set-up of a Project Advisory Group (PAG). Stakeholders from across the sectors including fishing and environmental interests will be invited to participate. In addition the Scottish Seaweed Industry Association chaired by Walter Speirs will also be invited to give an industry perspective.

## **4. Timetable**

- The SEA process has been started and a screening report prepared.
- We are undertaking a procurement exercise for someone with specialist knowledge on seaweed to advise on the SEA.
- We expect the SEA to be complete by the end of March 2016.

## **Recommendation**

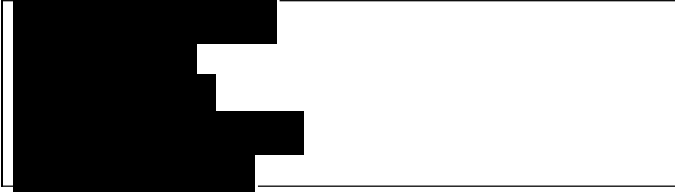
**The Cabinet Secretary is asked to note the above steps that are being taken. We will provide a further update to the Cabinet Secretary when the SEA is complete and provide options for next steps.**

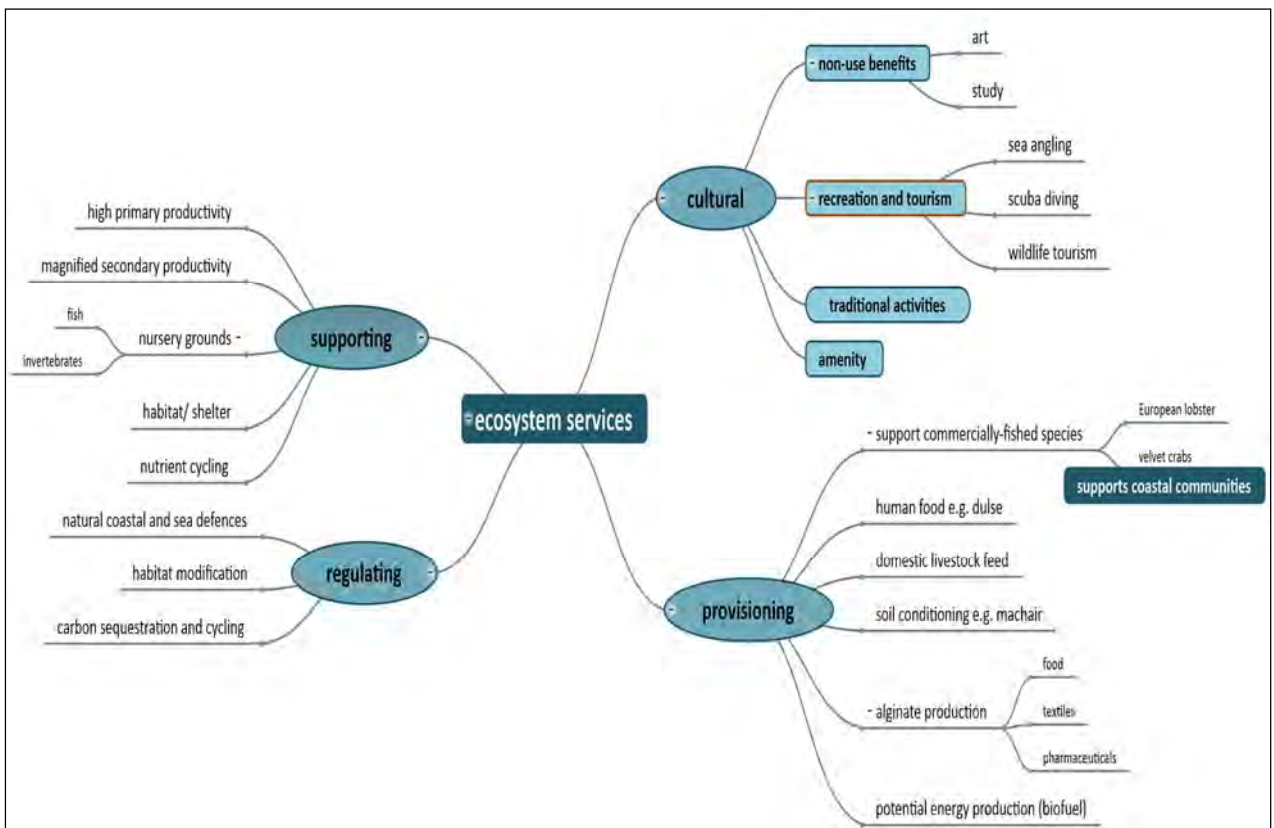
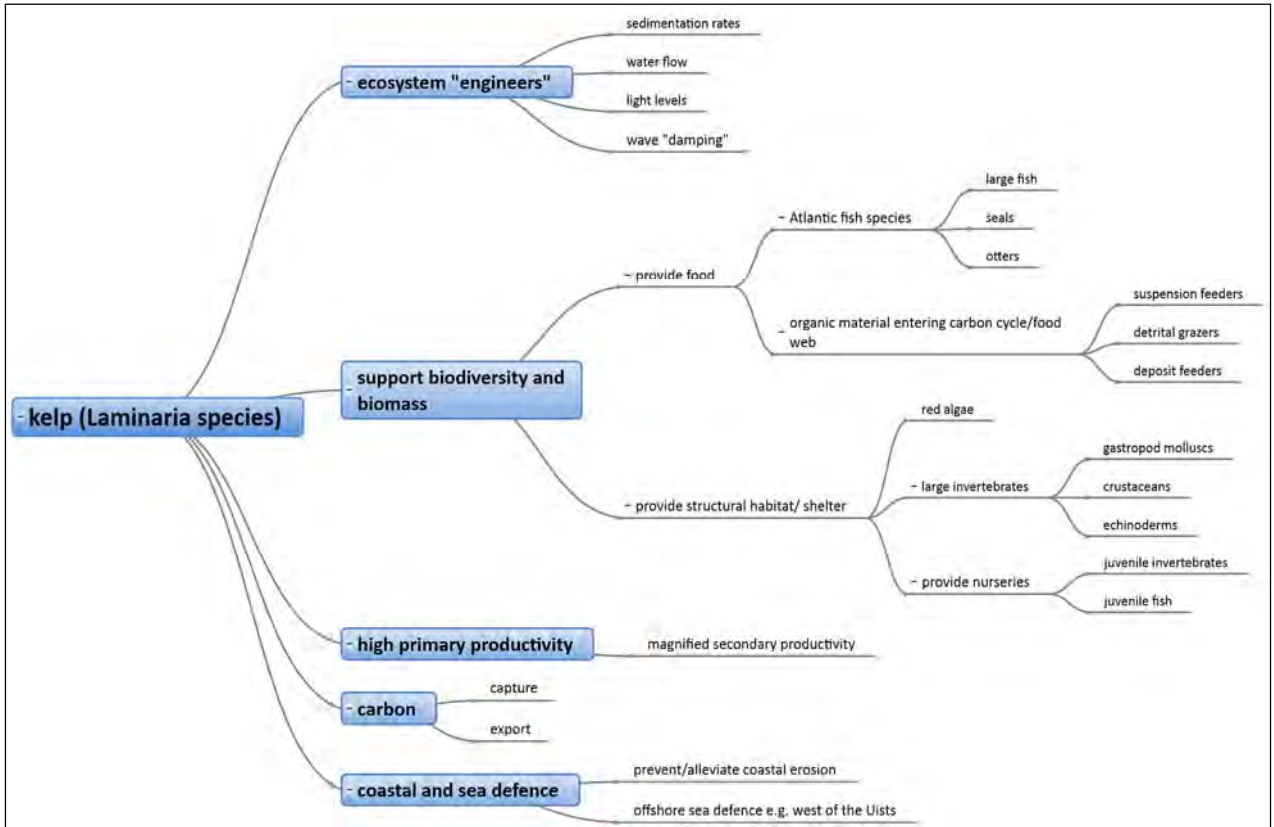
██████████  
Marine Scotland: Marine Planning and Policy  
██████████

3 November 2015

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Deputy First Minister					X
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform			X		
Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism			X		

DG Enterprise, Environment and Innovation  
Director of Marine Scotland  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████





[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 27 June 2018 11:27  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy; Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform  
**Cc:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; [Redacted]  
[Redacted] ommunications Rural Economy & Environment; Communications Rural Economy & Environment; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Wild Seaweed Harvesting and MBL Update - Submission - 27 June 2018 GA



Wild Seaweed Harvesting Update...

Please find attached a routine submission providing an update on Wild Seaweed Harvesting, including recent developments relating to Marine Biopolymers Limited (MBL) the outcome of HIE's "Wildweed" Report, discussions with Crown Estates Scotland and progress with the completion of the SEA process.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

marine scotland:

Fisheries Division

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 26 October 2017 10:07  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Cc:** [Redacted] Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; Director of Marine Scotland  
Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: HIE Wild Seaweed Harvesting project update

[Redacted]

Thanks.  
As I mentioned this morning, Scottish Enterprise has confirmed that the [Redacted] is still very much in the frame. [Redacted]

I would be happy to be involved in any discussions with [Redacted] if required.

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity  
**Sent:** 26 October 2017 09:57  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity; Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; Director of Marine Scotland  
Mailbox; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** HIE Wild Seaweed Harvesting project update

[Redacted],

Mr Ewing has noted with thanks and as discussed he would like to speak to [Redacted] on this.

[Redacted] will set up the call and we will confirm if you and/or [Redacted] is to be on the call.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**From:**

[Redacted]

**Sent:**

24 August 2017 16:34

**To:**

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity

**Cc:**

[Redacted] DG Economy; [Redacted]

**Subject:**

Communications Rural Economy & Environment; [Redacted]  
Briefing - Fergus Ewing - Mara Seaweed Visit - 30 August 2017

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity,

Please see attached briefing for the visit to the Mara Seaweed premises in Edinburgh on 30 August:



Briefing - Fergus  
Ewing - Mara...

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]