

## **Note of meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands and Tavish Scott, SSPO on 10 June 2021**

Present- Marie Gougeon - Cab Sec  
Tavish Scott - Chief Exec SSPO  
Donald Carmichael – MS ARF  
Kate Hall – MS Seafood trade  
REDACTED – MS ARF

### **Introduction**

The meeting was essentially a meet and greet occasion to welcome Ms Gougeon to her new role. Mr Scott already knew the Cab Sec well, and started off the discussion congratulating her on her appointment and inviting her to visit a fish farm as soon as she felt ready to start Ministerial visits.

### **Sustainability**

The discussion initially focussed on the pace of change and sustainability issues; mainly the SSPO sustainability charter and the collaboration involved in achieving its success. Community impact was noted and the Scottish Salmon Company's approach to the development at Applecross including the building of 40 new homes. Focus turned to the supply chain which was largely Scottish owned and the acknowledgement of its scope and breadth and how it could lend itself to the economic recovery process.

### **Regulatory Reform**

On regulatory reform there was a consensus that we had to align this with a vision for the future and the Government's aspirations for the Blue Economy. Mr Scott noted that he and his counterpart Oliver Robinson from the British Trout Association were happy to support the Scottish Government on this journey. CabSec noted that our key focus was on what we did in the next 100 days on regulatory reform and noted she would be interested to garner his thoughts. Mr Scott explained that the SSPO was focused on the Norwegian system, which is cheaper and quicker and recommended that the CabSec should undertake a study tour of Norway to understand how it compares with the current Scottish system. In terms of alignment and vision he recommended that someone should be appointed to drive that forward and had shared some names with Officials.

### **Community Impact**

Cab-Sec was keen to understand the extent of rejected planning applications. It was noted that applications were not being rejected on grounds of environmental issues, but rather on view/visual and impact on tourism and that this was becoming more prevalent in the Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council areas. One countermeasure being explored was to encourage more engagement and collaboration between MDs and local community councils to try and provide a balanced view on impact.

### **Anti- Fish Farm Activism**

Mr Scott discussed how effective collaboration with En-GOs, and their willingness to have sensible discussions on fish farming. He contrasted this with some of the

social media campaigners who were expressing extreme views of fish farming and the difficulties of trying to win that battle.

### **Sealice risk Assessment Framework**

Mr Scott expressed his anxiety at the time it was taking to get this policy off the ground and explained that the salmon sector had the best modellers on sealice and that we might wish to reflect on an offer from the sector to help produce for Government the modelling and data that meets the policy objections for the risk assessment framework. He further explained that the sector would meet the cost of this work and allow for peer review and validation. The CabSec noted that she was happy to think about the offer.

### **Conclusion**

Going forward it was acknowledged there was great merit in joining up our approach to policies and the housing and local structure example was key. On sealice it was agreed that a separate meeting on clarity and collaboration at official level would be helpful. CabSec noted she was pleased to work collaboratively on some of the wider issues discussed today.

Aquaculture Unit  
Marine Scotland  
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