

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

ORAL ANSWER 7

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Scottish Government when it will implement the findings of the first stage of the review on licensing in the aquaculture sector.

S6O-00916

MAIRI GOUGEON: The review undertaken by Professor Griggs is comprehensive, ambitious and fulfils the remit given to him. I thank him again for his work and efforts. I have already made clear my agreement to all the recommendations in principle and I will announce shortly the next steps to take us beyond this first phase. It is important that we maintain momentum and approach our commitment to streamline the regulatory process for aquaculture with pace.

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S6O-00916

(To be completed as necessary with any additional information)

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Annabelle Ewing: The Cab Sec will be aware that some 600 jobs in Rosyth in my constituency depend on the success of the salmon industry and so can the Cab Sec confirm that she will instruct her officials to now work in fact at pace to implement the Griggs review recommendations to ensure a better, more efficient and transparent aquaculture regulatory framework essential for future sustainability and competitiveness, and that she will work constructively with industry to get this right?

MAIRI GOUGEON: Aquaculture is hugely important to Scotland's economy and I recognise Rosyth as one of the communities that depend on the success of a sustainable aquaculture industry. As I have mentioned, we are determined to continue with momentum and pace in progressing work that takes us beyond this first phase. We are committed to collaborative working and will continue engaging with stakeholders into phase 2 of the aquaculture review and for the production of a Government led Vision for aquaculture.

As part of our manifesto commitments we will reform and streamline regulatory processes so that development is more responsive, transparent and efficient. To achieve this we are also committed, through our manifesto commitments, to implement a process that will bring greater clarity and speed to the process of aquaculture regulation. We appointed Professor Griggs as part of the 100 day commitment and are now finalising the next steps into phase 2 of the work required to move beyond the Status Quo.

In addition to this, in our programme for government we have stated that we will deliver a Scottish Government led Vision for sustainable aquaculture which places an enhanced emphasis on environmental protection and community benefits, which will require input from stakeholders, including industry.

POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Q: Will Professor Griggs' be part of the next phases of work for the Aquaculture Review and who will be included in the project board to be established?

MAIRI GOUGEON: I am grateful to Professor Griggs' for his approach to this review, the time spent speaking to stakeholders and the recommendations made to Scottish Ministers. I am currently considering the next steps of the review and the associated governance arrangements and structures required. I hope to make an announcement on this soon.

Q: What is the Scottish Government doing to support sustainable aquaculture development?

MAIRI GOUGEON: Aquaculture is and will remain a vital component of many of our coastal and rural communities.

In addition to commissioning the regulatory review and responding to the Salmon Interactions Working Group report, this Government committed to developing a Vision for sustainable aquaculture in Scotland. The Vision will provide clarity on SG's long term ambitions for the sector and will place an enhanced emphasis on environmental protection and community benefits.

I look forward to making progress on all of these initiatives in support of sustainable aquaculture.

Contact Name: [(Redacted text)]

Ext: NA

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S60-00916

(To be completed as necessary with any additional information)

ISSUE: Professor Griggs' review of aquaculture consenting in Scotland was published 10 February 2022. The aquaculture industry are keen to see change at pace and have responded positively to the recommendations provided.

The Independent Aquaculture Review carried out by Professor Griggs is the first phase of the Scottish Government's review into aquaculture consenting. The report, containing Professor Griggs' recommendations was published 10 February 2022. Officials have conducted feedback sessions to understand initial reactions to the published report with stakeholders from industry, NGOs and community groups. Discussions are currently underway to provide a clear path for progressing the recommendations from the Independent Review, to ensure regulations are more responsive, transparent and efficient.

1. Annabelle Ewing is the Scottish National Party member for Cowdenbeath.
2. Annabelle Ewing last asked a question regarding aquaculture 21 January 2021 to the previous CabSec "To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the impact of Brexit on the salmon industry."
3. On 31 July 2021, Professor Russel Griggs was appointed as the independent reviewer of the current fish farming regulatory process as part of the 100-day Manifesto commitment. The Terms of Reference are published on the Marine Scotland Website.
4. The Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party shared policy programme gave a commitment that the independent review would make recommendations for further work by the end of 2021. This was delayed due to the additional time required for ongoing stakeholder engagement.
5. The report, containing Professor Griggs' recommendations was published 10 February 2022.

6. Ms Gougeon, The CabSec Rural Affairs and Islands has welcomed the recommendations within the report and accepted them in principle. Officials are in discussion with Ministers regarding next steps.

Contact Name: [(Redacted text)]

Ext: NA