

**From:** [redacted – section 38(1)(b)] <[redacted – section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 31 March 2022 15:28  
**To:** McFarlane J (John) (Special Adviser) <John.McFarlane@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [redacted – section 38(1)(b)] <[redacted – section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Stage 1 deadline for the fireworks bill

Hi John,

As discussed, I am looking for advice around the proposed timetable for publication of the Stage 1 committee report and the debate. This has transpired due to the committee confirming they will be publishing their report on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April and the date of the debate being moved to earlier in the week to Tuesday 3 May (due to local elections).

As you will see from the email chain below there has been some discussion between MfPB and the Minister's office but I would welcome advice as to whether we should be exploring other options of getting the Bill through before summer recess while leaving some time for scrutiny; before I take this to the minister. As you will have seen at committee yesterday, members are continuing to raise concerns around the perception that this is being rushed through.

The current timetable would mean the committee report is published on Friday (29<sup>th</sup> April) and the debate would happen the next working day (Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May). While I appreciate suspending standing orders is not uncommon, this does seem to be particularly pronounced. The committee has indicated they expect the Government to provide a response to the report which we would need to provide on the Tuesday morning. Notwithstanding the practical challenges, my concern is that, over and above criticism on the timetable and lack of time for parliamentary scrutiny from the Committee, this could lead to similar criticisms being levied during the debate.

I have spoken with PLU and wider Bill team colleagues and we can see a *potential* alternative that, while continues to be exceptionally tight and would still require suspension of standing orders at later stages, would provide more time for parliament to digest both reports in advance of the debate, as well as for the government to respond. This would require moving the debate and stage 1 deadline to the following week (10<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> May respectively); with the remaining provisional deadlines remaining the same. The main implication of this are:

- Less time between stage 1 and 2, particularly if the minister wants to engage in discussions with committee members re potential amendments.
- Potential handling issues with the Committee as we've previously indicated there is no flex on the original deadline for stage 1 of 6 May – however, the original timetable was devised on the basis of not having to suspend any standing orders; and you will see below the clerks have also flagged the issue re lack of time between the committee report and debate as potentially problematic.

(The proposed change of debate date would only be beneficial if delivery of the Committee report remains to Friday 29 April).

**I'd welcome your views as to whether it would be helpful to seek a change to the Stage 1 deadline.**

Many thanks

[redacted – section 38(1)(b)]

[redacted – remainder of thread is duplicated from Item 74 (from 30 March 2022 11:08 email)]