

Mairi Gougeon  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands  
Scottish Government  
Edinburgh  
*By email*

24 November 2023

Dear Mairi,

I am writing to offer our continued support to you and your team as the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill progresses through parliament. Our view remains that your overall vision is right for Scotland. It is right to place crofters, farmers, and landowners at the heart of the plans and to ensure they are financially rewarded for delivering positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. The powers the Bill is seeking feel appropriate to meet these objectives and align well with our shared industry strategy: Sustaining Scotland. Supplying the World.

As you know, our vision is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to own, operate, and work for a food and drink business. To be renowned as a world leader in sustainable production and responsible growth, where resilient businesses across the entire supply chain can flourish and prosper. To achieve this vision, we need high quality, sustainable food production to continue, and we welcome this being explicitly mentioned in the Bill.

We want to help secure a future for our food and drink, including at the point of production, which is in harmony with the planet's resources and nature, whilst retaining the viability of rural communities and protecting producers' livelihoods. We are confident that questions about conditionality will be resolved through your clear and welcome commitment to further dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

We would also like to see, as part of this work or separately, a comprehensive strategic long-term plan for Scotland's land and waters, which maps out food and drink production alongside the infrastructure needed to enable sustainable and efficient production, access to local and international markets, and a fair return for all those along the supply chain.

We feel there is more to be done to join up the supply side (production, processing, and manufacturing) with demand (regional, UK and international customers including retail, hospitality, and the public sector) to ensure that agriculture and rural communities thrive, and more people can enjoy and benefit from Scotland's food and drink. I look forward to working on this with you, to benefit all of Scotland.

Yours faithfully,



Iain Baxter  
**Chief Executive**