

**Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform
and Islands**

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Chùisean Dùthchail, Ath-
leasachadh Fearainn agus Eileanan
Mairi Gougeon MSP/BPA



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Charlina Vitcheva
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Our Reference: 202400399749
Your Reference: sandeel fishing

21 February 2024

Dear Charlina,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February 2024 regarding the recent decision to close fishing for sandeel in all Scottish waters. The Sandeel (Prohibition Of Fishing) (Scotland) Order 2024 was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 5 February 2024 and pending parliamentary approval will come into force on 26 March 2024.

I appreciate that on this particular issue we have differing views from the European Commission and its members. However, as I mentioned in my letter of 2 February 2024, it is important to manage our marine environment in such a way as to ensure its sustainable use, while also protecting biodiversity and ensuring healthy functioning ecosystems.

Nevertheless, please be reassured that I value our longstanding relationship and look forward to continuing to work together constructively. The spatial closure in Scottish waters will come into force on 26 March, however if it would be of benefit, my officials are available to arrange a meeting with your officials to discuss the underlying policies that lead to our decision.

Yours sincerely

MAIRI GOUGEON

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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