



Scottish Government
FAO Mairi McAllan MSP
Minister for Environment and Land Reform
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Waternish, Isle of Skye, 16 March 2023

RE: Consultation Response Highly Protected Marine Areas

Dear Mairi,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide a response to the proposed Highly Protected Marine Areas (“HPMA”) regulations. In addition to the detailed questionnaire, we believe it may be of use to you if we set out our condensed thoughts in this letter.

Kaly Group is a young natural capital and nature-based solutions business that focuses entirely on the marine environment. We have set ourselves the task of building a business that works in equal measure for the natural world, the local community and for shareholders. We believe that in order to truly help nature recover, we must integrate the value of nature into business models. We are not the only ones with this mindset – Nature Scot knows there are many examples of such organisations on land.

Kaly is hard at work, deploying two principal strategies: seaweed farming and bio restoration. Seaweed farming provides substantial benefits to coastal waters: it sequesters damaging nutrients from agricultural run-offs, principally nitrates and phosphorous, provides a habitat for marine life, and sequesters carbon through the seabed burial of detritus. Bio restoration looks to replenish marine livestock to claw back losses the natural world has sustained from human intervention.

Over the last few centuries, mankind has had a terrible impact on the Scottish marine environment. It is easy to see the appeal of simply banning all human activity in designated areas. It is Kaly’s position however that nuance is still required before imposing overly strict regulations on HPMA’s. Eutrophication from damaging nutrients will continue to affect future Scottish HPMA’s – nitrogen pollution does not stop at a regulatory border. Similarly, the local community must continue to make a living – without substitute economic activity in a given area, HPMA enforcement is likely to fail.

Similarly, rewilding of the seas is a well-understood objective of all who love the marine environment. That is not to say though that there are no ways in which mankind could and should give Mother Nature a helping hand. On land for example, it is entirely accepted that investment in amateur beehives, popping up in countryside and inner cities alike, is a good thing for nature. Similarly, provision must be established for the responsible hatching and release of selected marine life, eg. mussels, lobsters and oysters.



Scotland is known around the world for its enviable track record in facilitating a new green economy. We believe that agenda-setting ambition should continue, also in the marine environment. Rather than banning all human activity inside HPMA's, Scotland should show the world how green jobs can be created by embracing the concept of commercial nature-based solutions providers and regulate for the creation of natural capital in the marine environment. On land this principle is already clear: human intervention through peatland renovation also takes place in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Marine restoration activities have only recently emerged. It is vitally important that new regulations for the marine environment provide a solid footing for these restoration activities to thrive.

Your sincerely,

Taco van Heusden
Director

Bruce Hare
Director

cc.

Kate Forbes, MSP
Ian Blackford, MSP