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Dear Stakeholder,

I hope my letter finds you well. I am sure you will have seen the announcement and publication by the First Minister, Humza Yousaf, of the [2023-24 Programme for Government](#). The Programme for Government sets out an ambitious agenda, which is unapologetically anti-poverty, pro-growth and prioritises delivering high-quality public services. We have a renewed focus on attracting investment, driving innovation, and growing our wellbeing economy, while also putting responding to the climate crisis at the very heart of this government.

That focus features significantly in the commitments I will be leading within the Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands portfolio. These commitments demonstrate my continued focus on ensuring that Scotland's land and seas are protected, nurtured and restored, ensuring they sustain our people, businesses and communities, both now and in the future.

In the 2023-24 Programme for Government, we have laid out a comprehensive vision to support and empower our rural and blue economies. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture are not just industries; they are the lifeblood of our communities and play a central role in bolstering our economy.

We are committed to fostering sustainable, productive, and prosperous rural and coastal communities. However, I acknowledge that making Scotland green, fair and prosperous is challenging – rural coastal and island communities know and live with this challenge more than most, not least when climate change and biodiversity loss threaten people's livelihoods and wellbeing. We will work tirelessly – with you I hope – to ensure a balance between environmental, economic and social impacts and benefits and to turn our vision into a reality.

Yours sincerely,



**MAIRI GOUGEON**

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