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Gillian Martin
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs
Scottish Government

20 May 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of Scottish Environment LINK to congratulate you on your reelection and reappointment to government as Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs. We look forward to continuing working with you at this important time for Scotland's climate and nature.

Scottish Environment LINK brings together over 50 environmental organisations, representing a broad coalition of expertise and collectively the support of over half a million people across Scotland. We are keen to support you in delivering Scotland's ambitions to tackle the climate and nature crises together.

Nature targets

We were delighted that one of the final acts of the previous parliament was the passage of the Natural Environment Act. The implementation of the Act and the introduction of strong, legally binding nature targets is a key priority for LINK members. We would welcome engagement with officials on the process for setting these targets to ensure they are ambitious, science-based and capable of driving real change. Alongside this, the effective use of new powers within the Natural Environment Act relating to deer management and forestry will be critical to support woodland regeneration and wider ecosystem recovery.

We are also keen to discuss with you the need for new guidance in relation to the amended biodiversity duty. Clear and practical guidance will be essential to help public bodies fully embed biodiversity in decision-making and contribute meaningfully to national nature targets.

Marine protection

You will be aware that LINK members were frustrated by the delayed consultation on fisheries management measures for inshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Many sites were designated over a decade ago, but without effective management they risk becoming lines on a map with damaging activities such as bottom trawling and dredging still impacting sensitive habitats. We have publicly called for the consultation to be launched within the first 100 days of this parliament and we will soon launch a public campaign with this ask.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

More broadly, we are delighted to continue working with you on our shared priorities and the delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. We have attached to this letter a copy of our recent report, *Hitting the Targets: Delivering Scotland's nature ambitions* which outlines our views on ensuring delivery in this parliament. We will also shortly launch a public tracker measuring progress on the actions within the Biodiversity Strategy which has been shared with your officials.

Agriculture

Farmers and crofters have a crucial role in delivering Scotland's environmental ambitions alongside food production. LINK members strongly support greater investment in nature- and climate-friendly farming. It is essential, particularly due to the increasing climate risks to food production, that agriculture is made more resilient and sustainable.

LINK members welcome the SNP manifesto commitment to build on whole farm plans to provide better targeted support for environmental outcomes. We also welcome the commitment to increase the level of financial support paid through Tiers 2-4, though note our ongoing concern that the pace of this change outlined in the Rural Support Plan is too slow.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in the near future to discuss these priorities and how we can work together to deliver progress.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment and we look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,
Deborah Long

Chief Executive
Scottish Environment LINK



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment

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