

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Dr Deborah Long, Chief Executive
Scottish Environment LINK
deborah@scotlink.org

6 July 2026

Dear Deborah

I am writing to mark the publication of the Scottish Government's statutory guidance and compensation hierarchy supporting the recent reforms to the Habitats Regulations for offshore wind.

The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781807752118>

The reforms, now in force through Scottish and UK legislation from May 2026 across both inshore and offshore waters, introduce a more flexible approach to environmental compensation for offshore wind, supporting deployment while maintaining protections for nature and enabling more strategic, large-scale environmental outcomes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Scottish Environment LINK and your member organisations for their constructive and informed engagement throughout the development of this work. The breadth and depth of input from your membership has been invaluable, particularly in shaping our approach to environmental safeguards, and has directly informed and strengthened the final policy and guidance.

I would be grateful if you could share our thanks with your member organisations, whose expertise and engagement have played an important role in ensuring the reforms are both robust and practicable.

We recognise that publication of the guidance is an important milestone, but it is not the end of the process. It will be essential that we continue to work closely together, including with Scottish Environment LINK members, to support effective implementation. We will undertake engagement with stakeholders over the coming months to support understanding and application of the guidance.

We are also progressing work to identify and develop a suite of compensatory measures that can deliver meaningful benefits for Scotland's protected area network, including seabirds. We are keen to continue working with you, including exploring opportunities to develop and deliver measures in partnership where this can support effective, large-scale outcomes for nature.

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It will be important that we learn as we go, monitoring how the reforms are working in practice, gathering stakeholder feedback, and continuing to refine and improve our approach over time to ensure protection for nature is balanced with delivery of offshore wind.

My officials will continue to work collaboratively with you and your members, alongside partners across government, industry and the environmental sector, to support implementation and maximise the benefits of these reforms for Scotland's marine environment.

Yours sincerely,



STEPHEN GETHINS

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