

PE1586/G

Scottish Environment Protection Agency Letter of 12 May 2016

Dear Sigrid

Further consideration of Petition PE1586

Thank you for providing the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) with the opportunity to comment further on the above petition.

What progress has been made on the research cited into biocontrol organisms as a means to reduce the impact of INNS?

As mentioned, SEPA is supportive of research underway into biocontrol organisms, however SEPA does not carry out research into biocontrols directly so we do not hold information on the progress of research. The Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) leads the UK research into biocontrols.

Are enough financial resources being allocated to tackle INNS given the problem appears to be getting worse and the figures provided appear to suggest that less money is being spent on the issue annually?

SEPA is allocated funding by the Scottish Government to help tackle pressures on the water environment, of which up to £100k per annum is ring fenced for INNS projects from the overall budget. As lead organisation for INNS issues in the freshwater environment, we do not have in-depth knowledge of the overall funding of INNS work in the wider environment.

Has SEPA issued a SCA and if so what was the outcome?

SEPA has not issued a Species Control Agreement to date.

Who has the right to carry out the legal removal of INNS?

As well as having a legal right to access the land or water in question, the removal of INNS may require approval or authorisation, or suitable certification of operators, depending on the species being controlled and the method being used. The removal of INNS would be legal by anyone holding the required authorisations and access rights.

What information or guidance is publically available on weekdays and weekends to advise the correct agency to contact about the growth and/or legal removal of INNS?

The SEPA website provides information on INNS in the freshwater environment, and includes a series of frequently asked questions that direct the reader to the relevant bodies and recording methods. This includes details of the Scottish Environment and Rural Services (SEARS) 24 hour helpline and email address which can be used

to report INNS. In addition, SEPA hosts a recording portal for priority INNS on Scotland's Environment Website.

Other bodies, such as SNH and the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat also host INNS information and guidance on their websites.

As a public body committed to openness and transparency, SEPA feels it is appropriate that this response be placed on the public record. If you require further clarification on any aspect of this correspondence, please contact Paula Charleson, Head of Environmental Strategy, SEPA Stirling Office.

Yours sincerely

Paula Charleson
Head of Environmental Strategy