

Public Petitions Committee
C/O Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

By email only: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

9 April 2013

Your ref: PE1431

Dear Public Petitions Committee

Public Petitions Committee – Consideration of Petition PE1431

Thank you for your letter of the 25th March that informed Scottish Government that the Public Petitions Committee considered this petition again at its meeting on 15 March 2013. Your correspondence sought a written response to two questions raised by the Committee; please find this information below.

What is your response to what the petition seeks?

Q - When will the outcome of the final assessment of the Demonstration and Research proposals be published, and what is the reason for the delay to the original completion date which was expected to be by December 2012?

Our 10 August 2012 response to the Public Petitions Committee stated that we hoped to be able to have completed the final assessment for all Demonstration & Research Third Party Proposals, including this one, by December 2012.

We worked very hard to try to achieve this, while also trying to deliver our statutory requirements on Nature Conservation MPAs, which included reporting on progress in December 2012. This report on progress can be found on the Marine Scotland website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/MPAParliamentReport>

The work to identify and deliver a network of Nature Conservation MPAs has been extremely resource intensive and due to its legislative nature, it was necessary to prioritise these obligations over the complementary opportunities provided to stakeholders to submit Demonstration & Research Third Party Proposals alongside Nature Conservation Third Party Proposals.

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In addition, we have been requesting further information from the third parties who submitted Demonstration & Research Third Party Proposals, and there is a need for there to be meetings between the third parties and other marine users, most notably fishermen, before we are able provide a final assessment.

The aim now is to complete the assessments of the Demonstration & Research proposals in time for the consultation on the Nature Conservation MPAs in Summer 2013.

I hope the above information was useful and please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Sebastian Howell