



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Mr Alasdair Morrison
Secretary
Struan Community Council
3 Coillore
Struan
Isle Of Skye
IV56 8FX

22 October 2018

Our Ref: KF4248

Re: Marine Biopolymers Ltd

Dear Aslasdair,

Many thanks for writing to me on behalf of Struan Community Council regarding Marine Biopolymers Ltd.

I am grateful to the Community Council for taking the time to share views with me on the consultation on commercial harvesting of seaweed on the west coast of my constituency. I have received a lot of correspondence on the issue, which highlights the importance that many of my constituents place on the sustainability and the economic impact of marine activities, which I share.

I firmly believe that Marine Scotland and Crown Estate Scotland should take a sustainable approach to kelp harvesting, that is based on sound evidence and data and which should not damage the Marine environment. It is good that Marine Scotland has consulted the local community at the pre-application stage and that you and others will have a further opportunity to provide your views on this at every stage.

I wrote to the Scottish Government with the concerns that were raised with me by constituents, and have now received a response which I have enclosed a copy of for your information.

Thanks again for getting in touch with me on this important subject.

Yours sincerely,

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 Kate Forbes MSP

 @KateForbesMSP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Forbes'.

Kate Forbes MSP

Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch



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 **COPY**

Ms Kate Forbes MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref: KF3962
Our ref: 2018/0030303
25 September 2018

Dear Kate,

Thank you for your letter of 29 August, raising the concerns of your constituents about mechanical Kelp dredging in the west coast of Scotland.

I appreciate their concerns were triggered by recent media attention around a proposal by Marine Biopolymers Ltd., a Scottish company to seek a licence to mechanically harvest wild kelp from multiple areas across the west coast. Consultation on their initial scoping report, as part of a Marine licensing process, has just closed and attracted over 2300 representations from members of the public and community groups, fisheries reps and Environmental NGOs.

This is the first proposal of its kind to mechanically harvest kelp from the seabed in Scotland and so requires a marine licence from Marine Scotland, on behalf of Scottish Ministers and engagement with Crown Estate Scotland. The method proposed is to pull a mechanical comb through the seaweed about 50 cm from the bottom and not dragging along the seabed as has been reported in some cases.

It is also at a very early stage in the process. This is not a consultation on an application, but a process to consider the environmental assessments needed to support one. The licensing process is there to ensure any such activity here takes account of Scottish circumstances, is sustainable and respects other users of the sea. Any application for a marine licence must follow a thorough process including environmental appraisal and full public consultation and stakeholder engagement. Activity will not be permitted until, and unless, the Scottish Government is fully satisfied with the proposals and all requirements for a licence met.

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Scotland's National Marine Plan sets out how Scottish Ministers intend marine resources to be used and managed out to 200 nautical miles. Whilst it has a presumption in favour of sustainable development and use of the marine environment, it must be sustainable and take account of other users of the marine area.

Scotland has one of the world's richest marine environments and we will continue to support clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas, balancing sustainable development with environmental protection.

Yours

Roseanna

Roseanna Cunningham

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