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Our Reference: 202300357623
Your Reference: UK Health Alliance on Climate Change

9 June 2023

Dear Dr Smith,

Thank you for your letter of 10 May to the First Minister, that you sent with your colleagues at the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change. I am pleased to respond on his behalf as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition.

In Scotland, we are taking an approach of ensuring a just transition to net zero, so that as we reduce our emissions and respond to a changing climate, our journey is fair and creates a better future for everyone – regardless of where they live, what they do, and who they are. This focus on wellbeing includes people's health, and we know that there is a strong link between poverty and poor health. By utilising our efforts towards emissions reductions and adaptation to tackle existing inequalities, we can deliver an economy and society which is centred on people's wellbeing. We are reflecting on the system-wide nature of the problem that you discuss through the development of our Climate Change and Just Transition Plans, and in our Environment Strategy that is developing a whole of government approach to achieving our net zero and environmental goals while contributing to people's wellbeing and prosperity.

The Scottish Government will soon launch a consultation on proposals for a Human Rights Bill, that will incorporate proposals to recognise and introduce a right to a healthy environment. This right will sit in a human rights framework alongside other rights, including economic and social rights. I hope your organisation will be able to consider and respond to that consultation.

You also raise the important point that both limiting climate change and achieving nature restoration are key for our future health and wellbeing. The Scottish Government is at the forefront of recognising the importance of tackling both global crises, for example in our recent national planning policy statement.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



We have also recently published an updated biodiversity strategy, focused on tackling the nature emergency in Scotland.

I welcome your support for the importance of these policies in securing our future health wellbeing, and hope that you will be able to contribute from your experience and expertise as we develop policies to deliver our ambitious objectives.

Yours sincerely



MAIRI MCCALLAN

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