

Jim Martin
Chair, Environmental Standards Scotland
Ìrean Àrainneachdail na h-Alba

ENVIRONMENTAL
Standards Scotland

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Finlay Carson MSP
Convenor, Rural Affairs Islands and Natural
Environment Committee
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22 December 2021

Dear Mr Carson,

I wanted to update you on progress since ESS launched in October and let you know about some upcoming events that might be of interest to your Committee colleagues and staff.

When we launched there was still much to do to complete the set up. Since then the Board and staff of ESS have been putting the remaining systems and services in place and recruiting the team we need to be a fully operational independent organisation. We have made good progress and ESS is now gradually transitioning into a more operational phase.

Whilst our staff and Board all continue to work and meet remotely, we have now established our office base at Thistle House in Haymarket, Edinburgh, and look forward to being able to adopt a more hybrid approach when Covid guidance allows us.

We have also been actively promoting our role and engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders. Many environmental organisations and community groups, such as the Coastal Communities Network and the Environmental Rights Justice Centre, have been keen to understand our role and actively raise matters of concern with us.

Whilst it is still early days for ESS, we have already received enquiries in relation to a wide range of environmental matters covering marine, aquaculture, protected sites, freshwater ecosystems and climate change. In addition to commencing our first formal investigation into air quality, the team is also now actively working on a number matters at pre-investigation stage to scope and prioritise candidate issues for more detailed investigation.

We will shortly publish our first business plan which will set out our priorities for 2022/23 and how we plan to use the resources allocated to us by Scottish Parliament.

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One of our key priorities in the New Year will be to launch a consultation on our Strategic Plan for 2022-25, which will take [our agreed Interim Strategic Plan](#) as its starting point.

We expect to formally launch this consultation in Spring 2022. In advance of this, we will be holding two online information sessions in January with our stakeholders, community groups and members of the public. At these sessions, we'll introduce ESS and our role in monitoring compliance with and the effectiveness of environmental law, as well as trailing the Strategy consultation and reviewing how to raise issues of concern with us.

If you or any of your Committee colleagues would like to join us, registration for the sessions is open as below:

[12:30-13:30 Friday 21st January 2022 \(for representatives of community groups and members of the public\)](#)

[12:30-13:30 Thursday 27th January 2022 \(open to anyone\)](#)

Please feel free to pass on this invitation to any of your contacts you feel would be interested in attending.

With best wishes for the festive season,

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