Mark Roberts
Chief Executive
Environmental Standards Scotland
Ìrean Àrainneachdail na h-Alba

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Tim Ellis
Deputy Director – Future Environment
Scottish Government
(By email)

7 April 2026

Dear Tim,

RE: ESS' Risks to Scotland's Soils analytical report recommendations

Thank you for your letter of 16 December 2025, regarding the Scottish Government's response to recommendations made by ESS in our report on 'The Risks to Scotland's Soils: A Scoping Report'.

I understand that ClimateXChange has been commissioned to continue work on the Soils Policy Route Map and that this work, which was due to be published in February, is now planned to be published in spring of this year. I recognise that further progress towards the recommendations made by ESS will depend on the outcome of this work. However, it would be helpful if the Scottish Government could confirm the publication date as soon as a more precise date is known.

As discussed at your meeting with my team on 20 November 2025, ESS will continue to monitor the response to our recommendations. We will follow-up with you again by the end of May 2026 (assuming that the second stage of the Route Map has been published by that date) and look forward to receiving further information then about the Scottish Government's intentions regarding implementation of the Soils Policy Route Map.

The two European environmental laws which were being progressed at the time of our report (the Nature Restoration Regulation and Soil Monitoring Law) have now both been adopted.

Member States have until 1 September 2026 to produce draft National Restoration Plans and 16 December 2028 to transpose the Soil Monitoring Law into national law. Subject to the outcome of the election and the priorities of the new Scottish Government, we will be keen to understand how, and if, alignment with these pieces of legislation is going to be maintained in the context of our finding about the fragmentary approach to soil monitoring and protection.

As ever, happy to discuss.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Roberts
Chief Executive

Environmental Standards Scotland
enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot
Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD
0808 1964000