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Dear Finlay,

SUPPORT FOR SCOTLAND'S PELAGIC PROCESSING SECTOR - ECONOMIC LINK ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2026

I am writing to provide an update on Scottish Government action to support our pelagic processing sector as a result of significant mackerel and herring quota reductions for 2026. Without doubt these cuts will have an impact across the pelagic supply chain - particularly for our processing sector – and I have judged it necessary and appropriate for Government to intervene and introduce measures to help maintain jobs and investment.

Following a period of consultation with key stakeholders across the pelagic supply chain, and careful consideration, I am announcing today that the current economic link condition will be amended. Effective from 1 January 2026, the licence condition will require species-specific landings of 70% for mackerel and 70% for herring into Scotland in 2026, up from the current combined requirement of 55%. These measures will apply for 2026 and be kept under review. At this stage, no additional changes to quota distribution are planned.

The Fisheries Debate on the 18th of November, highlighted the keen interest many have in the health and sustainability of our fishing industry, seafood processing sector and fishing communities. These measures aim to sustain the sector through this challenging period and position it for recovery when stocks recover.

MAIRI GOUGEON

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