



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Tavish Scott
Chief Executive, Salmon Scotland
By email only: tavish@salmonscotland.co.uk

Copy to:

Ian Murray
Secretary of State for Scotland
By email only:
secretaryofstate@ukgovscotland.gov.uk

11 April 2025

Dear Tavish,

Joint Government Collaboration on US Government Trade Tariffs

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Ian Murray, and I in response to our commitment to collaborative working to assess and, where possible, mitigate the impacts of tariff measures introduced by the United States Government.

I want to congratulate the sector on achieving a record value of exports last year, worth £844m in sales, and to recognise the importance of the United States (US) market as key to that success as the second largest market for salmon.

There can be no doubt that any tariffs imposed by the US will be damaging to the global, UK and Scottish economies. We are urging the US and all parties to come together and work towards mutually beneficial resolutions. Scotland and the US will remain close trading partners and enjoy longstanding social, economic and cultural links – as evidenced by Tartan Week, which was supported by UK and Scottish Governments and celebrated Scottish culture and world class food and drink sector in New York.

Our modern, recently reformed planning system in Scotland is now focused on facilitating appropriate development. We will continue to monitor the UK Government's reforms to the planning system in England with interest. The Scottish Government remains committed to delivering an efficient and effective fish farm planning and consenting system as a key requirement to support sustainable development and business confidence. I am grateful to the sectors contribution to the collaborative Consenting Task Group to pilot fish farm consenting improvements and I look forward to further progress this year, building on the findings of the independent evaluation exercise which is expected to report this May.

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Crown Estate Scotland's root and branch review of the aquaculture lease system (January 2022) and the changes introduced since will help to ensure that aquaculture lease fees remain proportionate, informed by production volumes and the market price of salmon, whilst continuing to deliver benefits to the communities which host aquaculture in Scotland.

As you note, a number of your asks relate to reserved policy areas, however I want to assure you that the Scottish Government also continues to raise these issues and to advocate on the sector's behalf, ensuring that Scottish salmon is considered in UK Government decision making.

The Scottish Government has recently raised the issue of the time limited concession for well boat workers with the UK Government, to whom UK immigration remains fully reserved, and will continue to make the case for a solution on this issue to be reached.

As you know, the Scottish Government's position is that EU exit has been damaging to Scotland and, in the absence of a route to rejoin the EU, we support the negotiation of a new UK-EU comprehensive veterinary and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement and exploration of measures which may help to reduce trade frictions and costs for exporters.

The situation regarding tariffs remains fluid. As we navigate through the coming weeks, I would be very grateful to be kept up to date with your assessment of the impact of potential tariffs on Scotland's salmon sector.

Yours sincerely,



KATE FORBES

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

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