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Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 6 November 2017 following up our constructive meeting on 3 November.

As we discussed, I am content to lead on this for the Scottish Government and look to you, as well as colleagues in CBC, FMEL, CMAL and CalMac, to support that and to work together in making progress with these shipbuilding projects, avoiding any further delays and exploring any options for recovering time.

We agreed that it would be appropriate, and in line with industry best practice, to arrange for a third party peer review of the production programme. We will need to agree the terms of reference for this and I propose that my officials in Transport Scotland liaise with Gerry Marshall and his team at FMEL to agree these. We are looking at potential candidates for this role and I would equally welcome any suggestions you have.

As you will appreciate it is vital to keep the Parliament updated on progress of the two vessels and I will therefore be writing to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee in that regard.

In my letter to the Committee, I have also suggested that they consider inviting you, and senior representatives of CBC, FMEL and CMAL (as appropriate) to future discussions of progress with the vessels. I am already scheduled to meet the Committee on 22 November for a general session on a range of matters within my Transport and Islands portfolio, and I expect that Members will take the opportunity to question me on the content of my and your letters.

Transport Scotland are also preparing proactive and reactive communications to coincide with the issue of my letter and will be liaising with your and CMAL's press officers.

I am copying this letter to Erik Ostergaard, Chair of CMAL.



HUMZA YOUSAF