

Alex Salmond,

I write to ask for clarification on your Government's policy towards my constituency. Yesterday during Parliament's debate on oil and gas one of your former Ministers stated that Shetland would be excluded from any rights to North Sea or west of Shetland oil and gas reserves if Scotland votes to leave the UK in the 2014 referendum. Is that your position?

Are you aware that Faroe, who are Shetland's near island neighbours and have a population that is double that of my constituency, is negotiating directly with oil exploration businesses over licensing rounds in their coastal waters. I presume your government is familiar with the constitutional relationship between Torshavn and Copenhagen? Faroe has a considerable degree of self-government and relishes that opportunity.

I also presume that your government has read the Capital Economics report produced this week entitled What would Scottish independence mean for the remaining UK? Could I particularly commend the third page of that report to you where it analyses the position of Shetland in any future negotiation over oil and gas reserves and points to the fact that a significant proportion of Scottish oil actually lies in waters surrounding Shetland. I assume you accept that fact.

Self-determination doesn't begin and end in St Andrews House. If you really want a debate about the future of Scotland you must accept that Shetland will want to determine its own future and will not simply be ignored, bypassed or trodden on by any negotiations that are not in the Islands interests.

I look forward to hearing your government's position.

Sincerely,

Tavish Scott
MSP for Shetland