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CROFTING FEDERATION LOOKS FORWARD TO NEW COMMISSIONERS' ROLE IN UPDATING CROFTING LEGISLATION

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has acknowledged the outcome of the recent election of Crofting Commissioners, saying that they have their work cut out to effectively regulate crofting.

Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF, said, "Crofting is a unique system of regulated land tenure, and the regulator, the Crofting Commission, has an unusual board for a government agency in that the majority of commissioners are elected. We were very pleased to see so many willing to stand in the elections, and that all six seats were contested. Over three and a half thousand crofters cast their votes which shows a great interest in how the system is governed.

"Now that the results are in and we have our new commission, it is essential that the new intake and returning commissioners are given a proper induction, with their responsibilities and remit clarified at the earliest opportunity. Crofting cannot afford to have a dysfunctional regulatory body. We know that lessons need to be learnt and every effort will be made to avoid a repeat of the past. SCF looks forward to working with the new Crofting Commission."

The Crofting Commission elections were declared at the count in the Town House in Inverness on 18th March. A total of 3,559 votes were cast across all six constituencies. From the six candidates elected, two will be continuing their term of office, two are returning to the commission after a period out of office and two are completely new members.

Mr MacKinnon added, "We have been pressing the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for crofting, Mairi Gougeon, to support the Crofting Commission in its function. An increase in budget has been awarded so we hope to see regulation being carried out more effectively. The reform of crofting legislation has been in the pipeline for many years and we are assured by the Cabinet Secretary that a bill will be written during this parliament, so we aim to see consolidation of the crofting acts before 2026. The new commissioners can play a vital role in this by collating the amendments that are needed to make the law effective for the commission to regulate the system well. It is clear from our village hall meetings that our members want the newly elected Commission to regulate effectively and to free up unused crofts for new entrants."

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