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Edward Mountain
Convener, Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
The Scottish Parliament

by email only

23 June 2020

Dear Mr Mountain

Inquiry into construction and procurement of ferry vessels in Scotland

Thank you for your letter of 18 June 2020.

CMAL wholeheartedly respects and values the work of the Committee and the important function of the Inquiry following the failure of the FMEL business. We are eager to contribute openly in this process, as we have done, and to continue to support the work of the Committee for the benefit of the island communities we serve.

Please let me take this opportunity to note our apologies for any distraction from this essential purpose that our actions may have caused. As you will appreciate, CMAL and its directors are proud of the reputation our organisation has established.

By way of explanation our view is that the statements in issue are, on the face of it, defamatory. We believed there was no basis upon which CMAL or any of its executives could properly be described as corrupt – being a serious criminal offence.

It was not our intention to interfere with the evidence of a witness. We sought acceptance that there was in fact no evidence for the allegation – or that if there was any genuine basis for these claims (given the seriousness of the allegation of corruption) for the witness to provide any evidence to CMAL so that it may be fully investigated.

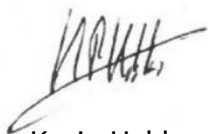
The defence of absolute privilege does not detract from the defamation itself. However, I can confirm that we have not instructed solicitors to raise defamation proceedings in relation to this matter – nor do we intend to in the future.

As I hope you will appreciate, whether made during a Parliamentary hearing or outside it, CMAL and its directors are harmed by false and defamatory allegations made against them. Nevertheless, it is a matter of regret to me that our solicitors' letter may be viewed by the Committee as going beyond what may be considered appropriate. CMAL apologise for that and hope that we can continue with the constructive dialogue and sharing of information available to CMAL as relevant to the Committee's investigation.



Please let me know if there is any further information that the Committee requires from CMAL at this stage in respect of the principal aims of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KHobbs', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Kevin Hobbs
Chief Executive Officer

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited