Dear (name of election candidate),

I am writing to you as a resident of (your constituency) and a voter in this year’s Scottish Parliament election. While there are many issues that are important to me and will determine my eventual voting choice, I am particularly concerned about the health of our ocean.

As the home of 62% of the UK’s waters, Scotland has a huge responsibility for marine conservation. Although 37% of Scotland’s seas are now in Marine Protected Areas, less than 1% of these are highly protected from the most damaging activities such as bottom trawling and dredging. Apart from the most vulnerable inshore sites, most of Scotland’s Marine Protected Areas are unprotected from highly destructive forms of fishing. I want to see all damaging activities in these areas banned and for them to be granted the high protections they need.

Our precious seas are also being choked by marine litter, with an average of 184 pieces of plastic found per 100m of Scottish coastline during our 2020 Great British Beach Clean. Many of these litter items could be banned and/or replaced by reusable alternatives. I want to see the next Scottish Government introduce a Circular Economy Bill which changes our make, use, throw - and sometimes recycle - system to one which is truly circular. This refers not only to plastics but to the chemicals used in our products that need to be regulated to allow for a clean circular economy. I also want to see Extended Producer Responsibility placed on manufacturers making them responsible for all costs incurred during a product’s lifecycle, as well as the promised implementation of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme.

To reverse our seas’ decline, I want to see a plan for ocean recovery where at least 30% of Scotland’s seas are highly protected from extractive activities by 2030. As part of this, we need fisheries to be fully documented to inform effective management and for all fishing vessels fitted with monitoring devices. We also need a sustainable footprint for fishing and for bottom trawling and dredging to be excluded from our most productive and fragile inshore areas to create a low-impact zone. As you know, we are facing a climate and ecological emergency and imminent action is needed to ensure that our ocean is healthy for generations to come. As the potential representative for my area, I want to ensure that you are committed to protecting our ocean before I cast my vote. Can you please assure me that your party has the relevant ambition and the ready-to-go plan of action that our seas so desperately need?

Yours sincerely,

(your name)