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PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Scottish Government debate: 'Taking Scotland Forward' Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment

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WWF Scotland would like to take the opportunity to brief MSPs ahead of the Scottish Government debate on rural affairs, climate change and environment. WWF Scotland works closely with other organisations in this sector, and supports the Scottish Environment LINK and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalitions.

Climate Change

WWF believe that climate change should be an issue that is considered as part of every Ministerial portfolio. Given the significant threat that climate change poses to people, species and the environment in which we live the urgent need to tackle climate change must remain a major issue for politicians, the media and the general public.

Scotland has been hailed across the world for its ambitious climate change legislation. Having passed the Climate Change Act in 2009, we now call on the Parliament to hold the Government to account on its implementation in order to deliver a truly low-carbon, safer, cleaner, healthier future. Annual emissions reductions targets have to be met through the implementation of the Government's Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP). The RPP for 2010 - 2022, published in January 2011, shows that emissions reductions from current policies only add up to meet 3 out of the next 12 annual targets (2013, 2019 and 2020). WWF Scotland therefore believes that more policy effort must be achieved in order to give the confidence that these targets will be met. Currently, the weakest areas of the RPP lie in the transport and housing sectors.

- WWF urges the Parliament to reach across Ministerial portfolios to ensure that all parts of Government play their full part in contributing to our efforts to tackle climate change.
- Greater action is urgently required to tackle emissions from the housing and transport sectors if these sectors are to deliver their share of Scotland's emission reductions.

Marine / fisheries

In 2010, the Parliament passed the Scottish Marine Act, a key piece of legislation to protect our marine wildlife and improve the planning and management of our seas. WWF Scotland, along with Scottish Environment LINK asks the Parliament to continue to hold the Government to account on its implementation of this key piece of legislation in order to restore and protect Scotland's seas.

The achievement of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture will be vital in helping to deliver good status for Scotland's waters. WWF believes that to secure a long-term future for fisheries in Scotland, a focus on conservation outcomes and long-term management is crucial, particularly under a reformed Common Fisheries Policy beyond 2012. WWF believe strong support for stakeholder engagement in the management of Scottish fisheries, so that Scotland can demonstrate to its European colleagues the benefits of real decentralisation and of long-term management plans, fishery by fishery, devised and implemented by regional stakeholders.

- Scotland has a critical role to play to ensure the CFP reform delivers sustainability through decentralisation and long term management plans.
- In the coming session we urge Parliament to back the creation of a strong national marine plan and designation of an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas (MPAs).

Waste

WWF Scotland support the Scotland's zero waste aspiration. Continued momentum to deliver this will be required in the new session. While recycling in Scotland is improving, our household recycling rates continue to fall behind those found in many European countries and the Scottish Government target to recycle and compost 40% of Scotland's household waste by 2010 has been missed. In addition to supporting greater recycling there is an urgent need to cut the amount of waste we produce in Scotland.

- Scotland needs a waste prevention plan that commits and maps out how Scotland can cut waste volumes in half by 2020 (household, commercial and construction).
- Greater segregation of waste at source would reduce residual waste and maximise the reuse and recycling value of materials.
- A landfill ban for recyclable and organic waste together with the roll out of a nationwide deposit return system, and support for variable waste charging for non-residual household waste would all help deliver a zero waste future.

Scottish Budget and Sustainable Development

A priority issue for the Parliament will be securing agreement on the Scottish budget for the years ahead. During the debates on the budget, WWF urges the Parliament to consider the climate impacts of Government spending and to press for sufficient funding to be allocated to implement the RPP in order to meet our legal climate targets.

- It is essential that priority be given within the Scottish Budget for measures which will tackle climate change and deliver Scotland's Climate Act.
- With the abolition of the Sustainable Development Commission Parliament need to step up efforts to support integration of sustainable development and scrutinise Government progress in delivering a sustainable Scotland.

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