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Sent: 27 January 2009 02:16
To: liz.kirk@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: Climate Change

Hello

My response to the consultation is detailed below.

David

1. What are your views on allowing the Forestry Commissioners to enter into joint ventures, with the intention of participating in renewable energy programmes on the national forest estate?>>

This seems a reasonable proposal that should be explored.

<<2. What are your views on allowing Scottish Ministers and Forestry Commissioners to offer leases and cutting rights over parts of the national forest estate?>>

I oppose this plan. By removing the best 25% of our public forest estate to private investors there will be less money to support the activities in the remainder. The income from the leases will no doubt be invested in making private enterprises in the fashionable renewable energy sector more profitable at the public expense.

If access is preserved it must be free and whenever possible without value added charges for parking and other services. We have paid to establish all this infrastructure already via generations of taxes.

I also do not understand why the management of said assets needs to be transferred. While the scheme will remove a small number of civil servants from the government books, these jobs are vital to the rural communities which do not benefit from big government spends on the NHS, banking and administration. Should a pension and public sector career only be the trappings of city dwelling administrators? I don't think so and support the retention of the jobs and expertise within the public sector.

Finally financial investors have sought after similar initiatives in the USA where they have been found to be more interested in the real estate value of the land, rather than running any form of sustainable environmental business. My concern that this initiative will pave the way for the large-scale disposal of the national forest estate to parties with questionable motives. Despite the rhetoric, the commitment of the scottish government to the environment is worrying....SSSI transformed to golf course....rumours about the private forestry sector that the whole of the scottish public forest estate being lined up for sale should Scotland become independent.....

<<3. What are your views on (i) transferring the proceeds from leases and cutting rights to a not-for profit trust, for investment in woodland creation; (ii) transferring the landlord's interest in this land to a not-for profit trust; and (iii) Ministers stipulating the constitution of such a not-for profit trust.>>

Sounds like yet another tier of admin, that will do no real work itself.....

<<4. Are there other actions which need to be taken, or are there other changes in legislation which need to be made, in order to allow the public and private

forestry sector to contribute to Scotland's target of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050? If so, please outline what these are.>>

We should aim to reduce timber imports/exports to avoid related transport emissions and deforestation overseas.

While I would welcome increased levels of forest cover a more pragmatic view on how this may be achieved is required. I have seen a small number of areas where native woodland establishment has failed 2 or 3 times and has had to be replanted. Perhaps we should be more open minded about non native species, particularly if the climate of tomorrow will be radically different.