



SCOTTISH CLIMATE CHANGE BILL: CONSULTATION PAPER

Response from the Scottish Rally Championship (SRC)

1. SRC Car Club Ltd are the current organising body of the Scottish Rally Championship, and along with its predecessors have promoted the sport of rallying in the Scottish forests for over 40 years
2. The SRC is the national series of events sanctioned by the Motor Sports Association, the governing body of motor sport in the United Kingdom. This consists of 8 events the length and breadth of the country, 7 of which are run primarily on Forestry Commission roads. These events encompass most of the Forest Districts in Scotland.
3. Over the years, the contribution of rallies to the local economy in various parts of Scotland has been hugely significant. The influx of competitors, officials, media and spectators to remote areas, often outside the main tourist season, has contributed millions to the economy and been acknowledged by local and national government with financial support. Examples of this are:
 - a) The significant financial support of the SRC over the last 2 years from Event Scotland;
 - b) The support for the RSAC Scottish Rally by Dumfries and Galloway Council every year since 1997;
 - c) The Colin McRae Forest Stages, receives similar support from Perth and Kinross Council and in 2008 boasted 6 ex-world Champions on its entry list and attracted record crowds of 45,000 to view the spectacle in the Perthshire forests;
 - d) The forthcoming inaugural RAC MSA Rally of Scotland, which was recently launched by the First Minister and showcased as one of the 'Jewels in the Crown' of the Homecoming Scotland celebrations.
4. None of these events could take place without the support of Forestry Commission Scotland, which makes its network of forest roads available for the competitive sections of each event in accordance with the terms of a Master Agreement negotiated every three years by the Motor Sports Association. Under this Agreement, a payment is made for the use of forest roads: for 2009 this is £573 per mile, meaning that the organisers of a typical one-day rally will pay FCS over £25,000 for the right to exclusive use of the roads on the day of the event.
5. The SRC is fully supportive of the principle of renewable energy programmes as outlined in the Scottish Climate Change Bill. Over the last twenty years motor sport has been to the fore in approaching environmental matters in a responsible manner. We are campaign partners in the Energy Efficient Motorsport programme (EEMS), whose Charter promotes active support for the development of energy efficient technologies in order to further reduce the environmental impact of motorsport. It also takes a pro-active stance in encouraging collaboration on appropriate development initiatives in this field.



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6. We are concerned, however, that the proposal contained in the Bill to offer long-term leases and cutting rights over part of the national forest estate, with a view to allowing the creation of renewable energy programmes, may have an adverse effect on the recreational use of Forestry Commission land by a large and diverse section of the population, and by motor sport users in particular. The agreement between the Motor Sports Association and the Forestry Commission has worked well over almost half a century. It is subject to review every three years to ensure that both parties respond to changing conditions: for example, increased attention is now paid to health and safety matters as well as to environmental concerns. The use of a flat rate charging system allows event organisers to plan and budget for events with some degree of confidence, while the Commission is under an obligation to provide alternative roads as far as is reasonably practicable when operational requirements dictate that roads regularly used for rallying are temporarily unavailable.
7. The consultation paper contains only very general references to public access to the tenanted forests being preserved and/or enhanced, so this will remain a doubt until the full details of the policies behind the proposals emerge. Our particular concerns are as expressed below:
 - Commercial factors may dictate that recreational use is incompatible with the interests of the leaseholders, with the result that individual forest areas may be lost to rallying.
 - There may no longer be a centrally-negotiated charging structure for the use of forests
 - Forests may be withdrawn from rally routes at short notice, with no realistic alternatives being made available, leading to the cancellation of events.
8. Historically, rallying is a sport at which Scotland has excelled, producing four World Champions in the form of the late Colin McRae, Derek Ringer, Robert Reid and Louise Aitken-Walker. The native talent exists to allow this number to increase in the future, but for it to be developed in Scotland, and for foreign drivers to come here to increase the level of competition, the facilities need to be there to enable organisers to continue to organise quality events in the Scottish forests. The financial benefits that the sport brings to rural areas and their economies is substantial and should not be underestimated, especially in the current economic climate

Conclusion

If the proposal is approved to hive off large tracts of the Scottish Forestry assets on long term leases, we would submit that appropriate clauses be embedded within these leases to protect and guarantee the continued access to these areas for the leisure uses that are currently undertaken in the forests in question.



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