

## Consultation on forestry provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill

Response to:

Q1 As the provider of the sites, FC should certainly enter into joint ventures with renewable energy developers. This would provide a future source of income and also lend an air of authority to renewable energy developers.

Q2 The introduction to the consultation refers to the assets and benefits to the public of the estate, which, of course, has been built up, following the Great War, initially in the interests of national security. Nearly a century later, the UK finds itself with dwindling manufacturing capacity and our hitherto flagship 'financial services' sector more of a burden than an asset. This would seem to make the forest estate, and the population's, through Ministers, control of it more important than has recently been the case.

During 35 or so years work in forestry, I have been outside of FC but often working with, and sometimes contracting to, some aspect of FC work. Colleagues in the 'private' sector are often heard to criticise the Commission's methods or shortcomings, but I formed the impression long ago that the FC estate gave the opportunity to set a standard and, to some extent, to mollify the effects of storms, both physical and economic. I see these as desirable values. However, I don't see the result of leasing out some of the most productive areas of timber harvesting, reportedly in the West of Scotland, as contributing to these values.

If it is worth, for example, a North American logging company paying out for cutting rights over Scotland, then surely it is worth FC managing these rights for the good of itself, ie the good of Scotland? It seems a high price to pay for a bit of inward investment - which would be used to promote further woodland establishment – to cede control of harvesting to a private sector conglomerate, which may not have the best interests of Scottish Forestry, or climate change, as a priority. And it would mean a loss of control; there is a

difference between the authority carried by a body merely trying to enforce a code and a body that is showing that the code is valid by working to that code itself.

Is it a question of FC management not being able to deliver what an outside company could? Perhaps this is the case if this proposal to sell out in order to secure some short term money is the best idea that FC hierarchy can come up with in order to help combat climate change. In addition, the potential threat of having the cutting rights for a district leased out isn't going to improve morale in staff at district level

An alternative which might be considered could be to follow the lead of the community windfarm movement, whereby the community, which can extend as far as you want it to, buys a share in a windfarm development. Perhaps it would be possible to offer community shares in the woodland estate as a fund raiser? When the FTSE 100 isn't such a good prospect, why not buy into a source of stored CO<sub>2</sub>, effective land use, local employment and great beauty?

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