

From: Julian Hall
Sent: 27 November 2008 12:04
To: liz.kirk@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Cc: southofscotlandlibdems@googlemail.com
Subject: Forestry provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill

Dear Liz,

Regarding

[http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/pdf/forestryscottishclimatechangebill.pdf/\\$FILE/forestryscottishclimatechangebill.pdf](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/pdf/forestryscottishclimatechangebill.pdf/$FILE/forestryscottishclimatechangebill.pdf)

> 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?

In the circumstances set out in the document, relaxing any legislation to allow this would seem to be wise if it is felt that there is sufficient expertise in the Forestry Commission to negotiate and manage such ventures.

> 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?

This would seem to be most unwise. Scotland's forested land is more than a facility for timber production and a location for renewable energy resources.

Forests are a significant feature of the Scottish landscape whose beauty, as well as being a significant contribution to quality of life is a major driving force in the rural tourist economy.

More directly, Scotland's forested land is a valued community resource, providing a venue for such worthwhile activities as walking, mountain biking and orienteering. As well as the immediate health benefits for those who participate in such activities, they are clearly of necessary economic value to rural areas.

The prospect of significant areas of Scotland's forested land being managed by private companies is horrific. If profit-making becomes the sole driving force, the value of maintaining the quality of the landscape and retaining accessibility for activities not on the company's balance sheet will be discounted. Although some Forestry Commission actions in the past have detracted significantly from the quality of the Scottish landscape, FC management is becoming increasingly responsible and, as a public body is more directly accountable.

> 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.

(i) This still doesn't address my concerns in 2 and I can't see it happening since one of the attractions of the lease (effectively a sell-off given the time-scale) is a generation of £200m income for the Scottish Government.

(ii) Unclear what this would really mean

(iii) Do ministers have the necessary insight to do this?

> 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.

None that I can see. Option 1 seems the best.

Thanks,

Julian Hall

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