Letter from Scottish Environment Link

28 September 2018

Dear Convener,

On behalf of Scottish Environment LINK members, we look forward to engaging with you in your role as Convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee.

As you know, over 35 organisations work under the banner of Scottish Environment LINK to achieve a more environmentally sustainable Scotland by engaging with policy-makers and MSPs, not least through our Species Champions initiative which raises awareness of Scotland’s precious wildlife and the need to act to protect it.

In many ways the work of ECCLR is more critical than ever before. Despite ambitious policies, Scotland’s environment is facing urgent challenges: declining biodiversity with as much as 1 in 11 species at risk of extinction in Scotland, impacting the key ecosystem services they provide; greenhouse gas emissions continuing at levels above those required to avoid catastrophic climate change; and natural resources being depleted at a greater rate than our environment can replenish.

As a small but ambitious nation, Scotland can tackle these challenges and reap the benefits of a cleaner and healthier environment alongside prospects for sustainable growth. The work of ECCLR is critical to achieving this. Scotland has already led the way in many issues. For example, the 2009 Climate Act put in legislation ambitious targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions but also required the creation of a Land Use Strategy. In successive policy documents, Scotland has reaffirmed its ambition to create a National Ecological Network which would not only be the first of its kind in Europe but a novel and effective approach to ensuring that environmental considerations and solutions are mainstreamed across all policy areas and are given a spatial dimension.

At the same time, the ongoing discussions around Brexit provide further uncertainty, both in terms of existing environmental progress and the future of environmental protections. These have been key concerns among LINK member and the reasons why we are calling for legislation to put existing protections guaranteed by EU legislation in Scottish law. We have been developing those views in greater detail over the summer and are now in a position to communicate those externally.

We look forward to an opportunity to discussing with you LINK’s headline priorities and particularly our aspirations regarding the protections that Scotland’s environment requires in the context of Brexit at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Dundas
Scottish Environment LINK Chair