



PE1367/E

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Director

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Fergus D Cochrane

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Dear Mr Cochrane

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION [PE1367](#)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Petition PE1367 which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ban use of the 'Mosquito' and other such devices which emit a loud, unpleasant, high-pitched noise designed to be heard only by those under 25.

The Scottish Retail Consortium (SRC) is the lead trade association representing the whole range of retailers in Scotland, from the large multiples and department stores through to independents, selling a wide selection of products through centre of town, out of town, rural and virtual stores.

Retail is at the heart of local communities, employing close to 250,000 staff across the Scotland and providing important local goods and services to consumers. The sector is an essential contributor to economic growth and to the regeneration of areas affected by crime and disorder.



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All too often retailers, their staff and their customers experience or witness crime and anti-social behaviour. The latest Annual Retail Crime Survey, published by the British Retail Consortium in January this year, showed that retail crime cost UK shops £1.1 billion in 2008/09. This was a 10 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

The most worrying trend was the increase in violence directed at retail staff. Our survey highlighted at least 22,000 staff suffered physical or verbal attacks or threats. In areas where there is a greater fear of violence and intimidation, retailers report a greater turnover of staff and higher incidents of sickness and staff absence.

The increase in crime and anti-social behaviour has occurred at a time when the industry can least afford the financial burden of additional security. With growing demand on a diminishing police resource, retailers have been forced to find new and innovative ways of working with the police to ensure that retail crime and anti-social behaviour is addressed without placing an additional burden on an already overstretched police service.

Members of the SRC are responsible retailers and recognise that the use of mosquito devices must be proportionate. Devices are therefore used in very few stores across Scotland and are only utilised in stores where there is a persistent, high-level of crime or anti-social behaviour. Additionally, devices are managed and operated under protocol and are only utilised at high risk times of the day to protect staff and customers.

Retailers have reported that the use of these devices has prevented staff from having to confront large groups of aggressive youths who can pose a threat to both staff and customers. It has also been found to reduce the number of call outs made to the police.

Should you require any further information please contact my office.

Yours sincerely

**FIONA MORIARTY
DIRECTOR
SCOTTISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM**