



Scottish Grocers Federation
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PE1367/F

18 November 2010

Fergus D. Cochrane
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
TG.01 The Scottish Parliament
EH99 1SP

petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Dear Mr Cochrane,

Consideration of Petition PE1367

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

SGF is the trade association for the convenience store sector in Scotland. Members trade in town centres, neighbourhoods and rural areas across the country, providing a local and convenient service and a focal point for the community. The SGF brings together retailers throughout Scotland, from most of the Scottish Co-operatives, SPAR, Nisa, Keystore, Costcutter and local independents.

Unfortunately, in many locations around the country retailers are victims of anti-social gangs of youths that congregate around their premises. These youths deter customers, intimidate staff and can commit vandalism and violence. Where a retailer is faced with this problem we support the targeted use of a mosquito device sparingly and as a measure of last resort.

We recommend that retailers that choose to use such devices do so only when other measures have not worked. We also encourage retailers and local Police to work together to develop the right solutions for the area. We would expect local agencies to look not only at the problem of how to prevent young people from congregating in inappropriate areas, but also to provide safe alternatives. However, at a time when police resources are under increasing pressure due to budget constraints, a mosquito device can be used sparingly as a tool to disperse groups of youths, without requiring the involvement of local Police.

Removing the ability to use tools like mosquito devices will make life harder for retailers that face real and often distressing problems. We accept that young people should not be demonised, however there is an anti-social minority that need to be deterred. This has to

be done through sanctions that include penalising young people that commit anti-social offences. The answer to tackling anti-social behaviour is not to remove sanctions and deterrents but to ensure they are effective and used appropriately.

If you have any questions regarding this submission please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

John Drummond
Chief Executive