

PE1383/K



Chris Hynd
Committee Assistant
Public Petitions
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

sent by email

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Dear Chris

PE1383: BETTER PROTECTION FOR WILD LAND

Thank you for your email of 28 October 2011 attaching the response from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to your request for an update on SNH's wild land mapping in the context of our petition (PE1383: Better protection for wild land).

The SNH mapping work has previously been recognised by the Public Petitions Committee (PPC) as providing an important contribution to the discussion about whether there is a need for legislative or policy change with respect to the protection of wild land. The John Muir Trust is therefore very encouraged to hear that SNH intends to publish the results by the end of November. This is particularly welcome in the context of SNH's initial response to our petition that "the time available for existing approaches to prove their efficacy must be regarded as limited" and that "there is a history, in the field of environmental protection, of acting decisively only when the resources in question are under extreme threat" (SNH response to PE1383, 2 February 2011).

The dramatic decline in the area of Scotland unaffected by the visual impact of built development - from 41% in 2002 to 28% by the end of 2009, an area around 14 times the size of Glasgow - represents a deeply worrying trend with profound implications for Scotland's future. There is also growing public concern, highlighted in both the national and local media, about developments that pose a threat to some of our finest wild land -

areas which have shaped the character and heritage of what the rest of the world knows as Scotland.

The Trust understands that our petition is scheduled to return to the Public Petitions Committee on 13 December. Our campaign for better protection for wild land has highlighted widespread, significant concern about the urgent need for action to protect Scotland's wild land. We gratefully acknowledge the role of the PPC to date in helping to move this debate forward.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can provide any further information ahead of the committee's meeting.

Yours sincerely

Helen McDade
Head of Policy