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Mr George Lyon, MEP
9 Newton Terrace
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24 November 2009

Dear Mr Lyon

European Parliament report on CAP reform

Scottish Environment LINK would like to congratulate you on your appointment by the Agricultural Committee to draft their report on CAP reform. We are delighted that Scotland will have a strong voice in Europe on an issue of such importance both for our land managers and the environment especially at such a key time for agriculture policy reform.

LINK has a long involvement in agriculture policy. We recognise the vital role land managers can play in environmental management and many of our members have first hand experience of managing land through farming or entering into agreements with farmers and crofters to produce heightened environmental benefits. Alongside the farming community, we have been concerned at declines in livestock numbers in marginal areas of Scotland, many of which are important areas for biodiversity but are dependant on grazing. It is clear we need to find a solution to prevent these areas from abandonment, not just to support marginal farming communities and to produce quality meat, but also to protect their wildlife and landscape value.

The enclosed report *Beyond the CAP: towards a Sustainable Land Use Policy that works for Scotland*, lays out Scottish Environment LINK's vision for the future of land management support. The report is the only one of its kind in Scotland, calling for radical reform of the outdated CAP, and laying out a long term view of how rural payments could benefit Scotland's people, land managers and environment. While it details actions for the Scottish Government to take in the shorter term, it also provides a vision for how longer term reform on a European level could benefit the environment and Scotland as a whole.

The CAP's huge €40.9bn budget – which began as a post-war means to pay European farmers to produce food – now lacks a clear direction, with a large proportion of payments based on what farmers used to produce in the past. It is vulnerable to demands from other parts of the EU budget and now is the time for a new, transparent and justifiable, Europe-wide policy. Scotland's land managers are particularly well placed to implement, and benefit from, such a policy, and this would give the CAP relevance and broad public support for the 21st century.



Scottish Environment  The voice of Scotland's environment movement

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We believe that LINK's work in this area should be of value for your research. We welcome your commitment to consult widely with the industry but believe that if the CAP is to be justifiable to the public who pays for it, all those with an interest must have a voice. We would be grateful for an opportunity to meet in the near future to discuss our ideas in more detail.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Marsden
Agriculture Task Force Convenor

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations - 33 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK assists communication between member bodies, government and its agencies and other sectors within civic society. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environment is fully recognised in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.