



MEDIA RELEASE

**RSPB Scotland
21st January 2009**

Flood bill needs more work to meet sustainability goals

Key aspects of the Flood Risk Management Bill, being debated in the Scottish Parliament today, need strengthening to ensure a truly sustainable approach to flooding.

Leading environmental charities including RSPB Scotland and WWF Scotland today called on the Scottish Government to implement recommendations unanimously agreed by the Environment and Rural Affairs Committee to strengthen key aspects of the Bill and place more emphasis on natural flood management.

Both charities have welcomed the Committee's suggestions, agreeing that they would strengthen key provisions of the bill including reducing the risk of floods in the first place and ensuring that flood risk management measures are actually delivered by the responsible agencies.

The benefits of getting this right and mitigating the risk of flooding in a truly sustainable way will not only help to improve and restore the status of the water environment, but will ultimately reduce the economic and social costs of flooding.

Andrea Johnstonova, Freshwater Policy Officer with RSPB Scotland, said: "It is no longer enough to simply talk about hard flood defences. These will only require more frequent and larger investments as the impacts of climate change advance. Rather, part of the solution is working with nature through the promotion of natural flood management including the restoration of our upland catchment areas and wetlands, and re-connecting rivers to their floodplains. This allows rivers to function in a more natural way, helping to manage flooding by storing and slowing the flow of water, whilst also creating amazing wetland habitats for wildlife."

Mike Donaghy, senior policy officer for WWF Scotland, said: "The future legislation that deals with flooding must be strong and robust enough to underpin effective management of floods in future, and in particular with climate change in mind. Scotland is set to get wetter and stormier, and sustainable flood management will become key to effective adaptation to these changes. We therefore fully support the Committee's recommendations which will help us achieve that."

The report and its recommendations will be debated this afternoon (Thursday 22nd January 2009) in the Scottish Parliament.

ENDS.

For more information/interviews/images, please contact RSPB Scotland's Head of Media James Reynolds on 0131 311 6500/07725065186.

Notes

- Sustainable flood management is an approach to reducing flood risk which considers a long-term approach, takes into account social, environmental and economic issues.
- The RAE Committee report can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/rae/reports-09/rur09-01-Vol1WEB.pdf>
- RSPB Scotland has long been campaigning for a sustainable approach to flood management. Our policy asks for http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/flooding_tcm9-158604.pdf
- Scottish Environment Link campaigns for sustainable flood management. <http://www.scotlink.org/pdf/LINKFTFVitalStepAug08.pdf>

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