



**MEDIA RELEASE
6 September 2005
For Immediate Release**

Pitfalls in planning bill proposals

Following today's legislative programme announcements by the First Minister, Scottish Environment LINK has responded by urging the Parliament to listen to the voice of voters and reconsider the decision in the Planning White Paper not to introduce a limited third party right of appeal into the planning system.

Despite a public consultation which saw 86% of respondents support the introduction of a limited third party right of appeal this did not form part of the Planning White Paper put before parliament by Malcolm Chisholm in June. As a result, Scottish Environment LINK has joined forces with the Association of Scottish Community Councils to highlight this omission.

The petition also insists that all planning decisions, especially those related to the proposed National Planning Framework, must be open to challenge and public inquiry.

Anne McCall, Convener of Scottish Environment LINK's planning task force said - "We are delighted that the Executive are introducing a planning bill, the planning system is out of date and in many cases out of touch with those who use it. In only one month over 1,000 people have chosen to sign the www.everyonecan.org petition calling for the introduction of a limited third party right of appeal. The Executive simply cannot continue to ignore this grassroots support."

Editors Notes

Contacts:

Anne McCall, Convener of the LINK Planning Task Force on 07734 717 019 or Friends of the Earth Scotland on 0131 554 9977

1. Scottish Environment Link comprises 36 member bodies representing over 500,000 members in Scotland. Further information about LINK is available from www.scotlink.org and further information about the campaign is available from www.everyonecan.org
2. The Association of Scottish Community councils represents approximately 650 Community Councils across Scotland. Further details are available on the ASCC website <http://www.ascc.org.uk/index.html>
3. The white paper "Modernising the Planning System" was published on the 29 June. During the original consultation on widening the rights of appeal in the planning process, 86% of respondents supported a limited third party right of appeal.
4. Paper forms of the petition are available from: Scottish Environment LINK 2 Grosvenor House Shore Road Perth PH2 8BD Tel: (01738) 630804 Fax (01738) 643290, email:

enquiries@scotlink.org and an electronic version can be signed at <http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/viewtopic.asp?TopicID=66>

5. The text of the petition reads as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the Scottish Parliament to seek to secure real rights for all in the planning system by ensuring that the forthcoming Planning Bill will:

- establish real and effective rights for people to have their views taken into account on planning decisions and conditions, through the introduction of a limited third party right of appeal in the planning system, rather than just more opportunities to express opinions; and
- ensure that all strategic planning decisions taken by Government at the national level, including the National Planning Framework, will be open to challenge and public inquiry.