

An Fhìor Urr Humza Yousaf BPA
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Am Prìomh Mhinistear
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Dear All

Thank you for your letter, setting out the challenges faced as a result of our changing climate, and the effects of nature loss, both in Scotland and across the globe.

I was pleased to meet with a number of those representing the signatories to this letter on 15 August and again on 8 November. At those meetings, I was clear that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss remain one of the most significant challenges we face. The importance of leadership on climate and nature could not be more stark - this is the fight of our lives, both for this generation and those to come. As you are aware, this summer has demonstrated the harsh reality of what climate change means for people and for nature – and I want to assure that this government does not underestimate the scale of action required and are committed to reducing our emissions in Scotland, adapting to climate change and restoring nature in a way that is fair and just for all.

Scotland has legislated for some of the world's most ambitious climate change targets. However, we know the challenge will become even greater in the years to come, requiring transformational action across our society and economy. We also know that government cannot achieve this alone – we need everyone to play their part. Success will need all of us – governments, politicians and civil society - to intensify our efforts to engage with the public over the urgency of the nature and climate crises, the solutions we must pursue, and the opportunities this creates.

We also know that we need to prepare for the impacts of climate change that are already locked in. In August, we published our interim response to the highest risks facing Scotland in a letter to the Climate Change Committee. This sets out how we are already building resilience to the impacts of climate change ahead of a new full Climate Change Adaptation Programme which will be published for public consultation early next year. The Scottish Government welcomes independent scrutiny of our response to the global climate emergency.

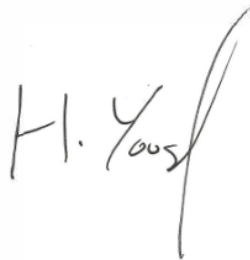
Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire
Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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Tackling the biodiversity crisis is also a priority and a vital part of our efforts to deliver net zero and build Scotland's resilience to climate change. We know that the restoration and regeneration of nature is critical for Scotland's future prosperity and societal well-being, and that it will support thriving communities in both rural and urban areas. It will generate new opportunities for private investment particularly in rural economies. This is why we are ambitious in our plans to tackle the biodiversity crisis in Scotland.

We have launched a consultation on our ambitious new strategy and delivery plan which seek to accelerate the progress we are already making to halt the loss of biodiversity. The consultation also includes proposals for the introduction of statutory nature restoration targets which will sit alongside our statutory climate targets. We have invested £65 million in our Nature Restoration Fund, to support multi-year landscape scale restoration projects and support local authorities to drive forward the development of nature networks. And of course, plans to establish a new national park are moving forward. I hope that you will engage with these consultations and work with us to ensure they are delivered effectively.

A whole of society approach is needed to tackle the twin crises My Government and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with all stakeholders to accelerate progress and deepen society's awareness and engagement of the vital work ahead. We specifically value the expertise which SE Link members bring across the many issues impacting biodiversity loss and climate change, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for working together with the Scottish Government, in tackling these major challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Yousaf', with a long, sweeping flourish extending downwards from the end of the name.

HUMZA YOUSAF