

Jim Fairlie MSP
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Scottish Government

5 June 2024

Dear Mr Fairlie,

Natural Environment Bill

The LINK Deer Group, representing all environmental NGO landowning organisations wishes to offer you the opportunity to discuss our concerns about current deer management systems and practices, as part of the Natural Environment Bill process. We have an offer from the Ardtornish Estate in Morvern, Highland to host this visit.

This estate has some of the best areas of Scotland's Rainforest, one of the important natural habitats most impacted by high levels of deer browsing and damage. Whilst we largely welcome the modernisation of deer legislation, and implementation of the independent Deer Working Group recommendations proposed by the Natural Environment Bill, we also think there are areas where the legislation can be improved. You would be accompanied during the visit by estate staff and by several members of the LINK Deer Group. We hope this visit can take place over the Parliamentary summer recess.

If, for any reason, an estate visit is not possible, we would request an online meeting with you to discuss our points. We are also aware of several progressive estates who are also undertaking sustainable deer management for climate amelioration and nature restoration purposes, and they might also wish to join us to make their views known. We are thinking of an event like the one arranged recently by Scottish Government to listen to the views of the deer stalking audience.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly to agree a suitable arrangement and some dates when you might be available.

Yours sincerely,
Duncan Orr-Ewing

Convener, LINK Deer Group
Head of Species and Land Management at RSPB Scotland