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Dear Beccy and Sir Andrew Cahn

Cc John Mason as Chair of RSPB's Scotland committee

I am writing to you on the back of the announcement of the proposed major changes at RSPB and the start of formal consultation processes. As CEO at Scottish Environment LNK, I and my team see firsthand the crucial importance of RSPB in policy and advocacy work in Scotland. With the positive pressures of 2030 and 2045 deadlines, the potential for game-changing progress through the Natural Environment Act, as well as a new Parliament in Scotland, now is the time for the sector to be able to make a positive impact for nature.

It would be devastating for the sector as whole to lose capacity right at the very time when we could make the most gains for nature. Those sectors where RSPB Scotland are leading highly effective scrutiny, be that offshore wind, land use and planning, upland management or farming support, for example, will no doubt be heartened to see a possible shift of focus away from this, emboldening them to continue as they are, and making our sector's case weaker. Right now, the leveraged impact we have as a network is biting and we aim, together, to make solid steps forward for nature over next 4 years.

But this is will indescribably harder without RSPB Scotland's expertise. The impact that RSPB has in Scotland is much greater than the sum of its parts: RSPB Scotland staff and team complement each other and other LINK members so effectively that the impact of significant cuts to their capacity and any shift in decision making and policy development authority out of Scotland will be detrimental to the whole sector and the likelihood of our success in the next 4 years. To be effective in Scotland, we need expertise in and led by Scotland. The impact of losing that, across the network, would be massive, all at a time when we need to focus our resources on the opportunities we have in the next 4 years.

I honestly cannot underline enough how fundamental RSPB Scotland is, to the environmental sector and to achieving effective policy change for nature. Losing this now would have repercussions across the sector and will be noticed by parliamentarians and policy makers right across Scotland.

It would be very helpful for me to have a better understanding of what the proposed impacts of your decisions might be on the LINK network at this critical time if you were able to share any detail on your proposals.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Long, Chief Executive



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