



Scottish Woodlot Association

Mr Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener
Local Government & Regeneration Comm.
Scottish Parliament
Holyrood
Edinburgh

Scottish Woodlot Association
Coppice Lea
Summerhill
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30th January 2015

Dear Kevin,

**Re: Local Government and Regeneration Committee Stage One Report on the
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill**

Thank you for inviting me along on behalf of the Scottish Woodlot Association to give evidence to the LGR Committee when it met in Dumfries. We were absolutely delighted with various recommendations and improvements your Committee has made to enhance the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, published earlier this week.

In particular we were so pleased that you recommended that legislation be changed to enable Forestry Commission Scotland to lease State forest land to non-profit co-operatives such as ours.

"Exclusion of certain public bodies

347. In addition we recommend the Scottish Government gives consideration to the various pieces of legislation which prevent the Forestry Commission from leasing land to communities for forestry purposes, and in particular, the leasing to not-for-profit industrial provident societies to enable greater use by communities of their land"

This will make a tremendous difference to our co-operative and to other similar workers co-operatives in the future.

As the largest forest landowner in Scotland, enabling Forestry Commission Scotland to lease State land to non-profit co-ops would mean we have the opportunity to create far more Woodlot Licences for local people to rent. It would also mean that our programme would have more secure tenure and give us a great platform to demonstrate the public benefits of Woodlot Licences to rural communities and to the good of the Scottish forest industry as a whole. We believe that for Woodlot Licences to reach their full potential in Scotland they need to be established on State land as well as private land.

We understand that the Committee Report and recommendations will be debated and its key principals voted on shortly in the Parliament on Tuesday the 3rd of February. If we can assist in any way with further information etc. please let us know.

Thank you again for your invitation to give evidence and for the recommendations you have made.

Yours Sincerely,

Andy Brown
Secretary

*The Scottish Woodlot Association Limited is an Industrial and Provident Society
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