

in place in the legislation to ensure openness and transparency, that the public will no longer be aware of these differences of opinion without resorting to Freedom of Information requests.

RSPB Cymru has given both written and oral evidence to the Environment and Sustainability Committee's inquiry into the draft Orders to create NRW. Following the publication of the current iteration of the Draft Second Order by the Welsh Government on 15th November, RSPB Cymru submitted a revised evidence paper to the Environment and Sustainability Committee. I have enclosed this evidence for the attention of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and hope that this will aid the Committee's scrutiny of the Order.

We have had considerable dialogue with the Welsh Government on these concerns and some alterations have been made but as the Second Order stands, we remain extremely concerned with regard the current drafting. I understand that the Welsh Government will most likely lay the final Second Order in February and we would hope that by this time the Welsh Government will have taken appropriate steps to address our serious concerns. We welcome the Committee's timely scrutiny of the Order which should enable these issues to be addressed and that there will be no dilution of the current protection and management of the natural environment as a consequence of the merger.

If the Committee has any questions relating to the evidence we would very much welcome the opportunity to provide further oral evidence to the Committee.

Kind regards

Katie-jo Luxton

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Director, RSPB Cymru