



yn rhoi
cartref i
fyd natur

giving
nature
a home

RSPB Cymru

Jeff Cuthbert AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
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24 April 2014

Dear Minister

The Future Generations Bill: Proposed Goals

We very much welcome your Government's commitment to sustainable development as the central organising principle for public sector policy and decision making in Wales and, hence, to your forthcoming Future Generations Bill (FG Bill).

We see this as a vital opportunity to ensure decision-making across Wales supports a healthy, resilient environment in which nature thrives – an outcome that is vital to support sustainable social and economic progress. However, we are very concerned that the suite of goals proposed for inclusion in the Bill does not reflect the imperative of a proactive response to secure the health of the natural environment in Wales. **We propose that 'Wales has a resilient and biodiverse natural environment' be added to the suite.**

The recent White Paper setting out proposals for the Environment Bill acknowledged the critical role the natural environment plays in support of a sustainable economy and society. This encompasses the provision of services such as carbon storage (contributing to climate change mitigation), and regulation of water flow and quality, as well as, for example, physical and mental health benefits to individuals and developmental and educational benefits for children, and direct employment opportunities through land management and tourism.

The White Paper also acknowledges the deterioration of Wales' natural environment – as evidenced, for example, in the recently published *State of Nature* Report (May 2013), showing the alarming scale of biodiversity loss in Wales and the UK over recent decades. Of the 3,148 species assessed in this landmark report, 60% have declined over the last 50 years. One in ten species assessed in the report were found to be at risk of extinction. In Wales we are at risk of losing iconic species of birds, butterflies, moths and plants. This health check of our wildlife showed that we cannot continue business as usual if we want future generations to be able to enjoy a country rich in nature, and the benefits this brings.

We believe the proposals in the Environment White Paper represent a major opportunity to secure the environmental management that will protect and restore biodiversity as part of resilient ecosystems, which in turn will provide the basis for sustainable development in Wales. Their success will depend, in part, on fostering broader understanding of the importance and value of ecosystems, and will require the commitment

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Mae'r RSPB yn aelod o BirdLife International, partneriaeth o gyrrff cadwraeth sy'n gweithio i sicrhau cartref i fyd natur o amgylch y byd.
The RSPB is a member of BirdLife International, a partnership of conservation organisations working to give nature a home around the world.

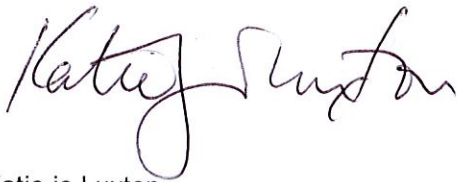
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Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Cymru/Chairman, Committee for Wales: Dr Havard Prosser Cyfarwyddwr, RSPB Cymru/Director, RSPB Cymru: Katie-jo Luxton

Mae'r Gymdeithas Frenhinol er Gwarchod Adar (yr RSPB) yn elusen gofrestrdedig: Lloegr a Chymru rhif 207076, yr Alban rhif SC037654
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654

of the whole Welsh Government and the wider public sector. Biodiversity is currently the best measure we have of the health of the natural environment, and is already used as a key sustainable development indicator. This is why we feel it is absolutely critical that the FG Bill sets the necessary context, and establishes a resilient, biodiverse natural environment as a sustainable development goal.

We would welcome a meeting with you to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely



Katie-jo Luxton
Director, RSPB Cymru

Cc: Alun Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food
Alun Ffred Jones AM, Chair, Environment and Sustainability Committee
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