



Confor briefing for Scottish Government debate, 1 June 2016

Taking Scotland Forward – Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Confor (www.confor.org.uk) is a not-for-profit membership organisation for sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. Confor represents the whole forestry and wood supply chain and focuses on strategic issues vital to the success and sustainable future of the sector. These include helping build the market for wood and forest products, creating a supportive policy environment, and helping members to become more competitive and successful.

Forestry has a major role to play in helping Scotland to mitigate against the effects of damaging climate change. The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) subject briefing on climate change¹ highlights that making Scotland's long term climate goals a reality is likely to involve wide-ranging changes to our land use systems - including significant tree planting.

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 to advise the UK Government and devolved administrations on emissions targets and report to Parliament on progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change. The CCC recommended in March that the Scottish Government should ensure 16,000 hectares (ha) of land are planted with trees annually, to ensure the country can meet its carbon reduction targets.

The SNP Manifesto commitment is to '...plant 10,000ha of trees every year until 2022.' In *Forestry and Timber: Growing a Resilient Scotland*, Confor asked the Scottish Government to plant 13,000ha of new forests every year between now and 2022 to make up the shortfall on the original commitment of 100,000ha of new planting in the decade until 2022.

Therefore while the Scottish Government's annual 10,000ha target is significant and represents 22 million trees planted each year, it is not as high as that recommended by the CCC - and will fall short of the original commitment of 100,000ha by 2022.

Forestry makes a significant impact to climate change mitigation as trees soak up carbon dioxide, while wood products store carbon. Tree planting also helps create excellent habitats for biodiversity - iconic species like the red squirrel and sea eagle love conifer trees - and

¹ SB 16-41 Climate Change: Subject Profile (Published: 25 May 2016)
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/99598.aspx>

managed forests can contribute significantly to reducing flood risks as part of natural upland management schemes.

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Notes

Confor: promoting forestry and wood is based in Edinburgh and represents 2000 businesses across the UK. www.confor.org.uk

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