

Shona Robison MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

by email to CabSecFLG@gov.scot

24 November 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary

United call for investment in woodland creation and management

We write to you jointly, on behalf of Scotland's leading woodland conservation charity and the leading forestry industry association of the UK, to request that you ensure the Scottish Government restores investment in Scotland's woodlands and forests in the forthcoming Scottish Budget to enable us to meet our national ambitions for climate, for nature, and for the Scottish economy.

The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS), administered by Scottish Forestry, is the "bread and butter" of funding for woodland creation and management in Scotland. In the course of this session of Parliament, the FGS budget has fluctuated significantly (difference on previous year):

2021-22	£62.8 million
2022-23	£69.5 million (+10.7%)
2023-24	£77.2 million (+11.1%)
2024-25	£45.5 million (-41%)
2025-26	£53.0 million (+16.5%)

The damage caused by the FGS cut in 2024-25 was significant and lasting. It harmed land manager confidence in woodland creation, disrupted supply chains, and led to the gap between Scotland's annual woodland creation target, and actual delivery, becoming a chasm. To make matters worse, that was totally at odds with Scotland's ambitions towards Net Zero, and the Climate Change Committee recognised the need for significant moves in the opposite direction. Woodland Trust Scotland and Confor added our voices at the time on behalf of native woodland for conservation and on behalf of the commercial forestry industry, and lobbied for that funding to be reinstated.


We were pleased therefore when the Scottish Government went some way to reversing that cut in 2025-26, but with the Climate Change Plan's woodland creation target sticking at 18,000 hectares per year, and the budget only paying for around 10,000 hectares, we desperately need to see more investment in woods and trees.

In order to scale up woodland creation in a steady manner, we would like to see multi-year funding commitments from the Scottish Government. In addition, we appeal to you today to increase investment in the Forestry Grant Scheme to £70 million in 2026-27, and incrementally to £100 million by the end of the next session of Parliament. In that way Scotland will finally meet its target

of 18,000ha of new woodland annually by 2030, and in a way which supports rural jobs, captures carbon, reduces reliance on timber imports at a time of significant international uncertainty in Europe and globally, helps deliver Scotland's 30 by 30 plans for nature recovery, and cements Scotland's place as a woodland nation.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course about your budget plans.

Yours sincerely,



Alastair Seaman
Director
Woodland Trust Scotland



Stuart Goodall
Chief Executive
CONFOR

CC Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands Mairi Gougeon MSP