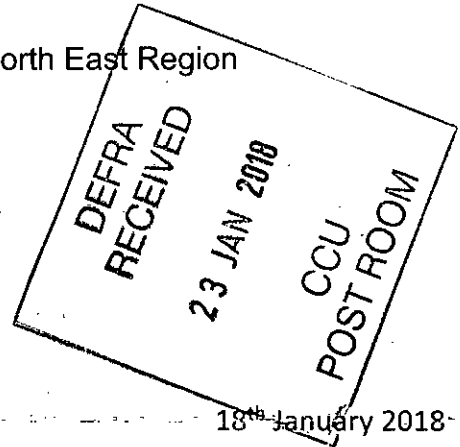




The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Peter Chapman MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Region

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR



Dear *Michael*,

I am writing to express my concerns over the possible reintroduction of lynx in the Kielder Forest on the edge of the constituency of Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire, which sits on the border between Scotland and England.

At a recent meeting of our Scottish Conservative Rural Affairs team, Rachael Hamilton MSP, who represents the area informed us of these possible plans and the impact they could have on the rural communities on the borders.

I have recently met with many of our key Rural and Agricultural stakeholders such as NFUS and SNH to discuss future agricultural policy, both these organisations have expressed their opposition to the reintroduction of lynx. The Scottish Government also oppose the idea.

Although there are financial concerns about funding livestock compensation schemes, one my main concerns with this possible reintroduction is the issue of animal welfare. We currently take pride in some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

Farmers want to ensure their farm stock have the best safety and welfare possible and the risk of attacks from wild animals is something we should try to limit in the UK.

It is simply unacceptable to subject our sheep to the possibility of being slaughtered by a wild animal which we have deliberately introduced. It is also unacceptable for our farmers to have increased worry that an attack could happen at any time.

All of our MSP's with rural interests or constituencies have agreed the reintroduction of Lynx would be a backward step to Kielder Forest's surrounding areas and focusing on protecting existing native species both in Scotland and the rest of the UK should take priority.



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Peter Chapman MSP  
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I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this important issue to the rural community in the Scottish Borders.

Yours Sincerely

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Peter Chapman MSP  
North East Scotland Region  
Shadow Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee