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Dear Members of Scotland Parliament,

As a member of Scotland's largest association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) I urge you to make substantial amendments to the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill.

BASC remains opposed to the implementation of grouse shoot licences, muirburn licences and licences for certain traps from the outset.

Nonetheless, the Scottish Government has decided to pursue this course of action, despite repeated concerns raised by the rural sector.

BASC has called for the following key amendments through its extensive lobbying of MSPs:

- A removal of the unworkable annual grouse shoot and muirburn licence, to be replaced with, at minimum, a 10-year licence.
- A removal of the powers allowing Scottish Ministers to add further bird species to the red grouse shooting licence.
- A complete overhaul of the powers around suspending and revoking a licence.
- Amendments to the muirburn licence, removing the 'last resort' clause and amending the definition of peatland.

Further to this, BASC is calling for a compensation scheme for licence holders who have their suspended licence reinstated after no wrong-doing. A similar scheme operates for driving instructors who experience income losses incurred by them as a result of their registrations or licences being suspended.

The Committee's own report, published in November, highlights just how unworkable the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill is and BASC has repeatedly raised concerns over how grouse shoot, muirburn and trap licensing will work in practice.

The Bill in its current form, threatens more than just successful moorland management, but also farming practices, conservation efforts, hundreds of jobs and millions in economic value. The direct and indirect benefits that arise from grouse shooting are too important to be risked in this manner.

As such I urge you as MSPs to make the enormous yet vital changes to the Bill to avert the decimation of the rural economy, biodiversity and conservation.

Yours sincerely,

1,071 members of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Best in the field

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