

LATEST STAGE OF LAND REFORM WELCOMED

Community Land Scotland is today welcoming the passage of the latest Land Reform Bill.

A spokesman said,

“Today’s passage of the Land Reform Bill represents important progress in taking Scotland further down the road toward more enlightened land laws and in extending the rights of communities to own land.

The Bill that is completing its parliamentary scrutiny is far stronger than the Bill that entered Parliament, because of hard work and sound scrutiny in which we have been pleased to play a part.

The new register of the people who really own or control land in Scotland will lift a veil of secrecy which has allowed all too many owners to hide behind shell companies registered overseas. Our right to roam Scotland’s land will soon be matched by the right to know who owns Scotland’s land.

The Land Commission and the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement create the foundations for continuing reform of land policy and land laws.

Importantly, in framing the land statement future government Ministers will be under duties to consider the realisation of the human rights of ordinary Scots at the heart of future policy. Those are people’s rights to decent housing, to economic development and jobs, to a safe and sustainable environment, and to secure food – all matters affected by how our land is owned and used.

The journey of land reform is far from over, but today represents another important staging post along the road.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Community Land Scotland has been an active participant in influencing this Bill, working with MSPs on a series of amendments to strengthen what it does.

At its core, the Bill provides for:

- every future Scottish Government to have a Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, which will now largely be directed toward land policy being about the progressive realisation of human rights to housing, food, a sustainable future, employment opportunities; and securing a greater diversity of land ownership in Scotland.
- the creation of a permanent Land Commission to keep land policy and reform needs under review.
- a new Register of persons with controlling interests in land
- guidance for landowners on how to engage local communities in important local land use matters (failure to observe the guidance can be taken into account in Ministers deciding community right to buy applications)
- a further community right to buy land when its current use is a block to a local community’s sustainable development
- new rights for tenant farmers to assign their tenancy to a wider range of people and to recover their investments when they retire