



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01457

Name of petitioner

Alex Hamilton

Petition title

Scotland's National Tree

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government, as a symbolic commitment to our woodlands and natural heritage, to proclaim the Scots Pine as the National Tree of Scotland

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I approached assorted Scottish environmental groups. The Scottish Wildlife Trust gave the most enthusiastic response publishing my letter to them as their 'Prize Letter', and the Perth and Argyll Conservancy expressed interest.

I also wrote to some politicians, Bob Doris MSP, Humza Yousaf MSP, Ian Hudghton MEP and Patrick Harvie MSP. Only Mr Harvie responded but he did not accept my proposal.

I wrote to Stewart Stevenson, then Minister for the Environment, but the response, kind and lengthy though it was, was from the Forestry Commission and indicated that they didn't know what they could do.

Petition background information

The debate about the future of Scotland is and should be multi-dimensional and I believe that the vision of the future of Scotland should include a permanent commitment to our woodlands and natural heritage. A clear statement to this effect should be made and, as part of that, I wish to propose that the Scottish Government and Parliament adopts the Scots Pine as the National Tree of Scotland.

The Scots Pine is an appropriate symbol for Scotland.

- It is the largest and longest lived tree in the Caledonian Forest and is our only native conifer grown commercially.
- During the past 300 years, the distribution of the Scots Pine was greatly reduced but its numbers are beginning to increase and the Scots Pine is thus a symbol of a resurgent Scotland.
- Like the people of Scotland, the Scots Pine comes in different shapes and

colours.

- The Scots Pine is a keystone species in the ecosystem forming the backbone on which many plants, animals, birds and insects depend; it is generous and all-embracing.
- The only bird which is endemic to the UK (ie found here and nowhere else in the world) is the Scottish crossbill (*Loxia scotica*), which is confined to the pinewoods. It is sometimes called the 'Scottish parrot' because of its crossed mandibles, which it uses to prise open the tightly-fitting scales of the Scots pine's cones. The seeds inside form the mainstay of the diet for this rare bird.
- The Scots Pine is known and loved by many Scots and having it as a National Symbol will encourage Scottish citizens in assessing, improving and being involved with their environment.
- The United Kingdom –or is it England?- has its Royal Oak; it is time for Scotland to have its National Tree!

I hope that the Scottish Parliament and Government, in cooperation with the assorted natural heritage and environment agencies and, most importantly, the Scottish people, will consider this proposal.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/NationalTreeOfScotland>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

16 / 11 / 2012

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Ideas and issues need a symbol around which people can unite and campaign when working together for the common good. It is accepted by most that our environment needs protecting and that our woodlands and forests have an essential role in preventing climate change and in improving our world. A National Tree of Scotland would be a valuable symbol of Scotland's commitment to our arboreal heritage and environment .

The Scots Pine is widely recognised among Scots as being their iconic tree; let the nation unite behind it.