The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.	PE01720

Name of petitioner

Les Wallace

Petition title

Natural Flood Alleviation Strategy for Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to develop a natural flood alleviation strategy under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have raised this issue with MSPs, signed various petitions and emailed the Environment and First Ministers in the past.

Petition background information

My understanding is that under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, Scotland currently has a range of flood risk management strategies and flood protection schemes. But to date there does not appear to have been much consideration given to the use of potentially significant sustainable and lower cost natural flood alleviation techniques such as targeted tree planting, insertion of large woody material in waterways and, where possible, the translocation of the Eurasian beaver (Castor fiber).

In recent years a series of trials in parts of England and Wales has shown that the use of naturalistic methods such as targeted tree planting and insertion of large woody material in water courses to reduce flooding shows great promise at a much lower cost than traditional heavy engineering flood prevention techniques, whilst also being good for wildlife. This is most marked in the case of the beaver which is involved in no less than four projects, existing or planned, to help alleviate flooding in England.

The case for comprehensive application of these initiatives is overwhelming, and any unnecessary delay in implementing that could lead to unnecessarily higher flood damage and associated distress to communities and businesses in the future. In the case of the beaver its reintroduction into the uplands would mean its damming would reduce both peaks and troughs in water flow, alleviating flooding and drought effects plus widened waterways would act as natural firebreaks as has been seen in North

America. There are significant benefits for homes, businesses and better-quality farmland in the lowlands. In addition, it will prove a boon to biodiversity and conservation, remove pollutants and reduce sedimentation.

There are also significant opportunities here in terms of public education and engagement - from helping to map watersheds to identify locations for these projects to practical work establishing them. If it is known that this will not only help wildlife and people, but that will be amplified by increased chances that a lost member of our fauna - the beaver - can return, then it is likely to be extremely popular. The excellent Treesponsibility project, whose aims include involving local communities in tree planting and to improve local environment and biodiversity for the benefit of local people and future generations, could serve as an excellent example for this.

Any loss of agricultural productivity should be minor, in fact it may increase with lower level farmland subjected to less flooding. As we waste 1.35 million tonnes of food and drink in Scotland each year reducing this would be a far more effective means of improving our food security rather than subsidising agriculture on poor quality land where flood prevention would be a far more sensible option. In fact, cutting food waste to help return land for wildlife conservation could be incorporated within government anti food waste campaigns. All of the above would be a considerably better alternative in terms of involving the public than their mopping out of flooded homes and businesses.

Unique web address

https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01720

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

10 / 06 / 2019

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Do you agree that Scotland has an opportunity to make better use of sustainable natural flood alleviation techniques?

What benefits do you consider these techniques can deliver?

Are you aware of other techniques that have been used elsewhere that could also be successful in Scotland?