

**PE1457/D**

**Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities Directorate**  
Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division

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Dear Chris

### **CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1457**

I refer to your email of 9 January 2013, seeking a written response to address the issues raised in the above petition. The Scottish Government's response is set out below.

- **What are your views on what the petition seeks?**

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government, advising on and implementing forestry policy and managing the national forest estate. Therefore, the FCS response to the petition should be considered to be the Scottish Government's response

- **The Committee is aware that there is uncertainty regarding the process by which such a designation could be made and seeks your views on how it could be done?**

As far as I have been able to determine, there are no powers for a formal designation of a 'national anything'. The issue of national trees, anthems etc has been raised in the context of the debate about independence and constitutional reform. I have been advised that, as of now, national status could only be achieved by way of a bill in Parliament or a resolution in Parliament.

The whole issue of 'national anything' would be addressed post 2014 if there were a 'yes' vote. The 5 Feb paper on *Scotland's Future: from the Referendum to Independence and a Written Constitution* sets out the intention for a constitutional

platform and the preparation of a written constitution – this would be the mechanism for considering a ‘national anything’ :

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/02/8079>

It might be worth noting that, as far as a national tree is concerned, as part of the Year of Natural Scotland , the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is launching a Big 5 plants and trees poll to find the nation’s favourite tree or plant.

Please let me know if you need any further information

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