



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SCF CRITICISE CROFTING REGISTER PLANS AS 'JUST WRONG'**

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) have issued a clear rejection of the Scottish Government's plans for the crofting register in their evidence to the Parliamentary Committee for Rural Affairs and Environment on the Crofting Reform Bill.

Marina Dennis, convener of the SCF crofting reform working group said, "The plans put forward by the government for the crofting register are poorly conceived and are just wrong. There seems to be little understanding of what these proposals would mean in reality. As we have already stated, the proposal to use 'trigger points' to force croft registration is unworkable and even appears designed to be "adversarial" as the crofting lawyer Simon Fraser put it. It will cause crofters endless delay and expense. Crofting lawyers are recognised experts in these matters and two of the most respected of them, Simon Fraser and Sir Crispin Agnew, have deplored the government's 'trigger-point' plans and supported the SCF's ideas for the register to be based on a community mapping process. We have also questioned why croft tenants are being asked to map the land over which they hold an annual lease. What other tenants have to do that? But the evidence presented to the Parliamentary Committee by the Scottish Government shows they have paid little heed and are still way out of touch".

When pressed by the Committee convener for clarification on the perceived benefits of a register the Registers of Scotland (RoS) spokesman said, "We envisage that the crofting register will aid the regulation, administration and support of crofting in the future. For third parties, it will be simpler and easier to obtain information on crofting". He went on to say "A map-based register will certainly aid a third party—a person who is not the crofter—who wishes to obtain information on a particular croft".

Ms. Dennis continued, "It is clear that creating a register of crofts under the RoS is for just about anyone else's benefit except the crofters, who are being asked to pay for it. [They keep saying it is about 'certainty'. Certainty for whom?](#) The majority of crofters are already certain of the extent of their holdings. Why should crofters pay for something that appears to be primarily to aid third parties? We think that the register should just be a tool for administration and regulation, and so should remain with the crofting regulator and should be paid for by the government. There seems to be widespread consensus that a community mapping approach is the best way forward but the government insist that their 'trigger point' system has to be used. We are asking that this is put on hold for five years and that the community approach is given

a chance to work. Why not test and support that approach for five years when it is accepted that their 'trigger' system will take at least two generations to compile the register?"

Minister for Environment Roseanna Cunningham also announced to the Committee that she found the community mapping idea 'interesting'. She went on to say "We will therefore invest £100,000 to subsidise group registrations of crofts to the tune of £20 per croft where 10 or more crofts are registered at the same time."

Ms Dennis responded "£100,000 divided by nearly 18,000 crofts is actually around £5.50 per croft. Offering a crofter a discount of some £5.50 when they are having a fee imposed of £80 - £120 to register a croft is nonsense. We don't want token discounts. We want no additional costs imposed on crofting and some real investment in a community mapping approach to complete the register of crofts held by the Crofting Commission. We can't be clearer than that".  
END

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#### **Notes to editors**

- The relevant Parliamentary committee transcript can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/rae/or-10/ru10-0602.htm#Col2532>
- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>