



NEWS RELEASE

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SCF welcome Environment Minister's renewed commitment to curbing speculation on croft land.

The Scottish Crofting Foundation have welcomed Roseanna Cunningham's renewed commitment to tackle property speculators on croft land and have suggested a radical reform to crofting law to help curb speculation.

Ms Cunningham, the Scottish Government's Environment Minister, was speaking at the SCF's annual gathering in Grantown on Spey this morning (Tuesday 29th).

She told crofters that despite withdrawing a requirement that houses built on former croft land be used as main residences, the government would continue to explore ways of keeping land affordable for those who wish to take up crofting.

She said: "Crofting is part of the social, cultural and economic fabric of Scotland. It is a unique way of life which we must ensure has a sustainable, profitable, future in the 21st century. That means tackling the problems of absenteeism, neglect and speculation. There is consensus on this issue."

After her speech, SCF chief executive Patrick Krause replied: "We are very pleased that the Minister has dropped the occupancy requirement which justifiably received little support among crofters. It was not the right way to proceed as the Minister acknowledged today. However, she is absolutely right to say that doing nothing to curb speculation is not an option.

"As we suggested in our response to the draft bill, removing the right to assign outwith the family is an option that warrants serious consideration as a means to curb speculation and support crofting communities.

"We are also pleased to hear her supporting the call for democratising the Crofters Commission. David Green, the convenor of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, also spoke and reminded people that he is an elected convenor of a non-departmental

government body. This demonstrates a precedent, illustrating that there is no reason why the new Crofting Commission should not have an elected convenor."

END

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Notes to editors

- The Scottish Crofting Foundation is the largest association of small-scale food producers in the UK.
- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/home>