



NEWS RELEASE

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Crofting Federation welcomes government commitment to continue crofting legislation reform

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has welcomed the Scottish Government commitment to continue the process reforming crofting legislation within this parliamentary session, as indicated by the consultation launched this week.

“This is another stage in the long process of crofting law reform,” said Russell Smith, Chair of the SCF, “and we are pleased that the Scottish Government is taking this forward. Following the 1993 consolidation act there have been several amendments to crofting legislation but this is still unfinished business. The addition of subsequent layers of legislation, and the fact that amendments have introduced further inconsistencies and errors, has rendered current crofting law difficult to access and, in some aspects, unusable.

“This consultation is seeking views on the most suitable way to proceed with any crofting law reform and how it might be improved,” Smith continued. “It opens up opportunities to take a fresh look at crofting legislation and its purpose. At this point we may ask what crofting legislation should achieve and how best it can do this.

“It is widely agreed that the law does need to be reformed further and there are suggested a range of options for taking this forward but neither of the two extremes of merely consolidating with little change or starting all over again with a ‘clean sheet’ are going to achieve a desirable result. So, we are being asked to choose between the workable options of amending and then consolidating the law or ‘restating’ it. The consultation document helpfully explains the difference.

“Whilst exploring ways to make the legislation fit for purpose we must not lose sight of the fact that crofting legislation was formed to protect crofters’ rights, not to serve lawyers,” Smith continued, “this principle is inviolable. The crofting act is the heart of crofting and has evolved over 130 years, adapting to work for crofting in a changing world. This is another time of change, but the basic principles of protection must not be lost.

Smith concluded, “The SCF will be looking at these options in considerable detail and will be both seeking our members’ views and providing information for them. We encourage all

crofters, and others with an interest, to attend the events the Scottish Government will be hosting and to respond to the consultation before it closes.”

END

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Notes to editors

- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>