

Your ref:

Our ref: SE

6 March 2019



John Finnie MSP
Scottish Green Party
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Midlothian
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Finnie

NON-DOMESTIC RATES ON SHOOTINGS AND DEER FORESTS

I write to you on behalf of SLE's Highland members following your comment on sporting rates in The National on Saturday 23 February. I hope the below clarifies some misunderstandings.

The assessment and collection of rates on shooting rights and deer forests is not related to entitlement, privilege or 'bloodsports'. Rates on shooting rights and deer forests are applied regardless of whether the rights are used and anyone, regardless of the holding size or management objectives, who occupies sporting rights are subject to being rated – Scottish Government, Scottish Wildlife Trust, farmers, forestry enterprises, tenants, and crofters are a few examples. You can see from the public valuation roll on the Scottish Assessors Association website that these occupiers have also appealed several of their valuations.

The Bill did not provide adequate time for the Assessors to identify and value the shooting rights and deer forests sufficiently. This resulted in some rates being applied which do not reflect reality. The level of appeals has been similar to that for other sectors such as pubs, shops and hotels.

We would be delighted to meet with you to discuss the contribution that our members make in the Highlands including deer management and adding economic value.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katy Dickson', written over a light grey signature line.

KD
Katy Dickson
Head of Policy

cc Megan Rowland, SLE Highland Regional Support Officer