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Ìrean Àrainneachdail na h-Alba

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Tim Ellis
Deputy Director – Future Environment
Scottish Government
(By email)

4 July 2025

Dear Tim,

RE: ESS' Risks to Scotland's Soils analytical report recommendations

Thank you for your letter of 8 April 2025, regarding the Scottish Government's response to recommendations made by ESS in our report on ['The Risks to Scotland's Soils: A Scoping Report'](#).

I welcome the constructive dialogue that has taken place since the publication of our report and the recognition that soils are a vital natural resource. ESS will continue to monitor implementation of the response to our recommendations and we look forward to engaging with Scottish Government officials as this work progresses.

Recommendation 1

ESS notes the Scottish Government's intention to decide whether to introduce statutory requirements for soil protection in Scotland once the EU framework is finalised. The EU Nature Restoration Law was adopted in June 2024 and provisional political agreement on the EU Soil Monitoring Law was reached in April 2025, with formal adoption anticipated by the end of 2025. We will continue to monitor progress with EU legislation on soils and will seek an update from you on plans for Scottish legislation once the EU Soil Monitoring Law is finalised.

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ESS also notes Scottish Government's intention to incorporate soil health into several existing and upcoming plans, frameworks and strategies and that the Soils Policy Route Map commissioned from ClimateXChange is expected to guide the future strategic direction for soils in Scotland. Now that ClimateXChange have published their report I would be grateful if you could provide an update on the Scottish Government's planned approach to, and timelines for, implementing the recommendations set out in the Soils Policy Route Map.

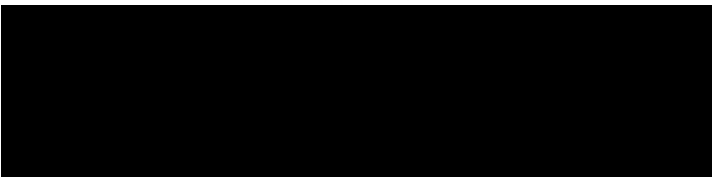
Recommendation 2

ESS notes that the Scottish Government is supporting research to build the evidence base on the risks to soils through its Strategic Research Programme and the James Hutton Institute. ESS will actively engage with the Scottish Government's Strategic Research Programme and the James Hutton Institute to understand how forthcoming research will address the gaps in the evidence base identified in ESS' report relating to soil biodiversity, the environmental impact of waste spread on land and carbon sequestration schemes' impact on soil carbon.

As noted above ESS will seek an update on the Scottish Government's intentions to introduce statutory requirements for soil protection in Scotland (including mandatory, national monitoring requirements) once the EU Soil Monitoring Law is finalised.

I look forward to receiving further information from you on your intentions with regard to implementation of the recommendations in the Soils Route Map.

Yours sincerely,



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