

ENVIRONMENTAL

Standards Scotland

Ìrean Àrainneachdail na h-Alba

News release

Immediate Release

30 January 2026

Environmental Standards Scotland welcomes the approval of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill by the Scottish Parliament

Part One of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill assigns Environmental Standards Scotland as the independent review body for Scotland's new statutory targets for biodiversity.

Today Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) has welcomed the approval by the Scottish Parliament of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill (the Bill) following the conclusion of Stage 3 on Thursday 29 January 2026. The Bill must now receive royal assent for it to become an Act of Parliament.

Part one of the Bill sets out the legislative framework for the setting, monitoring and review of statutory targets for improving biodiversity. The Bill assigns ESS as the independent review body for monitoring these new statutory targets for biodiversity.

Mark Roberts, CEO of ESS said:

"We welcome the approval of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill, which sets out a clear ambition for tackling the biodiversity crisis in Scotland. The introduction of new statutory biodiversity targets in Part One of the Bill represents an important step forward towards protecting nature, restoring ecosystems, and strengthening our resilience to climate change.

“We also welcome our new role as the independent body responsible for reviewing progress against these new biodiversity targets. We will now work to prepare, integrate and deliver our new functions.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- i) In May 2025, ESS responded to the Scottish Government consultation on the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill. You can read this response [here](#).
- ii) An increase in ESS funding to support the delivery of this new duty is set out in the [draft Scottish Budget](#) published on 13 January 2026.
- iii) Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) is an **independent** public body, set up to ensure environmental laws and standards are adhered to in Scotland, replacing the European Union’s scrutiny and enforcement role after Brexit. ESS’ mission is to ensure that Scotland’s environmental laws and standards are complied with, and their effectiveness improved to achieve Scotland’s ambitious targets for the environment, nature and climate change. You can read about ESS’ current remit and powers [here](#).