



RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

David Stewart MSP
Convener
Public Petitions Committee

c/o Clerk to the Committee
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Dear David

Public Petition PE1500 on the golden eagle as the national bird of Scotland

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee considered your letter dated 4 April 2014 requesting views on the value, purpose and means of choosing any new national symbols and our response to you is set out below.

The Committee agrees with the widely held view that the purpose of national symbols is to unite people by creating a visual, verbal or iconic representation of the national people, their values, goals and history. The Committee is of the view that there is value in this and Scotland clearly has a number of national symbols, from the unicorn in the royal coat of arms of Scotland, to the thistle, representing Scotland in the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

The Committee notes the assignation of the Scots Pine as the national tree of Scotland, following a three month consultation by the Forestry Commission Scotland. The Committee is of the view that there may be some merit in exploring the benefits of identifying further national symbols. However, we are conscious that there may also be a limit to the number of national symbols that may be appropriate. Should there be a desire to take this forward the Committee would support a considered approach to the questions you pose, engaging directly with the people of Scotland in an open debate.

Yours sincerely

Rob Gibson MSP
Convener