Parliamentary Debate “Restore nature on a massive scale to help stop climate breakdown”

4.30pm Monday 28th October at 4.30pm in Westminster Hall

This is your chance to help stop climate breakdown through nature’s recovery!

Something momentous seems to be happening. We’ve seen the arrival of Extinction Rebellion, the BBC’s hard-hitting David Attenborough documentary on climate, student strikes inspired by Greta Thunberg and a wave of declarations of climate and ecological emergencies across the UK.

The UK Parliament has been pioneering in its own declaration of environment and climate emergency and ambitious new net zero-carbon target by 2050. We can achieve this but it’s no longer enough just to reduce carbon emissions. We also need to remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Rewilding and other natural climate solutions can draw millions of tonnes of CO2 out of the air through restoring and protecting our living systems.

We have a chance for the UK to become a world leader in natural climate solutions. Those who manage our land and sea play a pivotal role and should be supported to come together to deliver carbon reductions. So we call on the UK government to make a bold financial and political commitment to nature’s recovery.

Rewilding Britain’s report (link below) demonstrates how investing in nature is an extremely cost effective way to draw millions of tonnes of CO2 out of the air whilst also providing alternative economic opportunities for those rural areas facing most uncertainty post-Brexit.

Over 100,000 people have shown their support – with by far the greatest support coming from people in living rural areas. By signing our petition they have now triggered a debate in parliament.

This debate is an exciting opportunity. Now is the time for the UK to show the way in responding to the climate emergency. Delivering land use change with nature at its heart can play a major role in our efforts to meet our climate targets alongside all the other multiple benefits it brings.

We are asking you to attend and engage in the debate to demonstrate your support for investing in natural climate solutions like rewilding as a cost effective way to help us reach net carbon zero.

Using a costed proposal, our report demonstrates how the UK government’s declared “public payments for public goods” scheme can be put into practice by incentivising farmers and landowners to sequester more carbon in the UK’s woodlands, uplands and meadows.

We estimate that six million hectares of regenerating woodland, peatland and species-rich grasslands could sequester about 47 million tonnes of CO2 per year, more than a tenth of current UK greenhouse gas emissions.

In total this would cost around £1.9 billion per year, a third less than the current estimated EU Common Agricultural Policy cost of £3 billion. Additional funding could be easily raised through revenue from an economy-wide mandatory carbon pricing mechanism which also acts to disincentivise carbon emissions.

I would be very happy to discuss this further if that would be useful.

With many best wishes,

Rebecca Wrigley,
Chief Executive, Rewilding Britain

rebecca.wrigley@rewildingbritain.org.uk
Additional notes:

We propose a model of payments that values carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement in different restored ecosystems, particularly focused on less productive and marginal landscapes to minimise opportunity costs for food production.

Our indicative annual standard payments would support restored peat bogs at £144/ha, woodland at £512/ha, heathland and species rich grassland at £292/ha, saltmarsh at £322/ha, ponds and lakes at £204/ha and offshore ecosystems at £161/ha per year. Land holdings that come together to form contiguous zones of recovering, protected and restored ecosystems could attract enhanced payments. This would create two million hectares of new woodland, combined with full protection for the UK’s peat bogs and heaths – totalling another two million hectares – and support for an additional two million hectares of species rich grasslands.

The full report 'Rewilding and climate breakdown: How restoring nature can help decarbonise the UK' can be downloaded from https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/our-work/rewilding-vs-climate-breakdown

The parliamentary petition 'Restore nature on a massive scale to help stop climate breakdown' can be found at https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/254607