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31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

The Right Hon Lord Bonomy  
2002 Act Review  
Natural Resources Division  
The Scottish Government  
1-C North, Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ

Dear Lord Bonomy

## **REVIEW OF THE PROTECTION OF WILD MAMMALS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002**

I am writing to you in my capacity as a representative of the Scottish Hill Packs Association and as the huntsman of the Three Straths Fox Control Association.

The Association gave extensive oral and written evidence during the passage of the bill prior to it being passed in 2002. This can be referenced through the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) and it is not my intention to go over the evidence again

The method of hunting employed by the members of the Association was unchanged by the Bill and we have continued to control foxes and mitigate their impacts on stock and wild birds since then.

The amendments to the original bill were drafted in a way that allowed the effective control of foxes by the using dogs in certain circumstances, this was recognised by the scrutiny committee of the parliament and eventually the majority of the members of the Scottish Parliament when the bill was passed.

The Hill packs have continued to operate within the spirit as well as the letter of the law and it is always our intention to dispatch the fox as quickly as possible by sending it to the waiting guns.

If amendments to the bill as it is currently laid were proposed, we would be very keen to offer the Hill Packs view on the possible impacts that these amendments could have. Some of the current proposals being discussed, although well intentioned, could be more harmful than the current situation. As an example, restricting the number of

hounds that could be hunting at any one time may appear to have some merit, however when hunting an extensive conifer plantation in a Highland glen, this would achieve no more than a greatly extended hunt as it would take much longer to cover the area and the fox would be under less of an incentive to leave cover and face waiting marksman. This would not achieve an enhancement of the welfare of the animal or make control more effective and humane.

Yours sincerely

Paul Crofts