

Dear Labour MPs,

We are writing as key stakeholders in the ecological, environmental, planning, natural resources and finance sectors to urge you to support the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (the Bill) in its current form when it returns to the House of Commons.

We welcome the Government's recognition that for too long Britain has struggled to deliver the development our country urgently needs – be that housing, infrastructure or other projects vital to national renewal. Planning reform is essential to unlocking growth, and we therefore strongly welcome the Bill.

We also recognise that healthy natural systems are a critical foundation for the economy and growth, providing essential nature-based services such as flood protection, water purification, carbon storage and temperature regulation. These systems reduce risks to homes, businesses and infrastructure, supporting economic resilience and stability. They also underpin the well-being of people across the UK. A thriving economy depends on a thriving natural environment. We commend the drive to ensure that development across the UK acts as a driver for nature restoration.

We support the Government's ambition to speed up development and deliver wins for both growth and the environment, and we believe that the Bill could now deliver on that ambition following debate in both Houses of Parliament and the inclusion of key amendments, including Amendment 40 (formerly Amendment 130).

Amendment 40 was tabled in the House of Lords with cross-party support and passed decisively by 258 votes to 139. This broad consensus reflects recognition across the political spectrum that the amendment is both necessary and proportionate.

The amendment ensures that Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) – a new mechanism introduced in Part 3 of the Bill – are used only where needed to address strategic environmental issues that require collective, landscape-scale action, such as nutrient neutrality, water management and air quality. These

are the diffuse challenges that individual developers cannot, and should not, be expected to resolve alone, and that currently delay development and increase costs and uncertainty across the planning system.

In focusing EDPs on system-wide issues, Amendment 40 rightly excludes protected species and habitats from the EDP framework. This is critical for two reasons.

Firstly, we believe that excluding protected species and habitats from EDPs will help to reduce public opposition. We need an end to the perception that development and nature are at cross purposes. As a constituency MP, you will know that many Labour voters care deeply about the environment and local greenspaces. Research consistently shows that Britons most value and treasure the green spaces in their communities, with nature remaining a consistent source of pride even when other aspects of life are challenging.

Secondly, it keeps species protection within the existing, well-understood systems that developers know how to navigate and that are working effectively for both developers and nature. These carefully developed systems already enable proportionate and timely approaches to species and habitat protection without adding unnecessary complexity.

While we know that large swathes of the public acknowledge and welcome the need for housebuilding and infrastructure, there is often community opposition based on environmental concern. It is unhelpful when development is perceived as coming at the expense of nature. We commend the Planning and Infrastructure Bill for seeking to address this by putting in place measures for the restoration of nature alongside development, and we believe this will unlock opposition and lead to positive outcomes for growth, the economy and nature. Amendment 40 is an important part of this and sends an important message to voters that the Labour Government cares about nature, will protect local greenspace and wildlife, and that the system will ensure developers deliver for nature alongside the housing and infrastructure that Britain urgently needs.

We believe that delivering healthy natural systems alongside development and infrastructure will be absolutely critical to unlocking growth and to securing the future of a vibrant, resilient Britain. We are excited about what this future holds: building homes and infrastructure, restoring nature through innovative, nature-based solutions, and working together to build a stronger economy and a healthier environment for all.

Yours sincerely,

- Ben Carter, Executive Director, Labour's Environment Campaign – SERA
  - Sally Hayns, Chief Executive Officer, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
  - Dr Julia Baker, CEnv, MCIEEM, Director, UK Biodiversity and Business Forum
  - Kate Jennings, Chief Executive Officer, Association for Consultancy and Engineering & Environmental Industries Commission
  - Professor David Hill CBE, President, Foundation For Nature
  - Ruth Murray, Director, Environment Bank
  - Tom Nelson, Director, Nature Impact
  - Dr Gabriel Connor Streich, Chief Executive Officer, Greenshank Environmental
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- Henry Rossiter, Business Director, Belmont Estate
  - Alex Begg, Director of Finance, Swallowtail Ltd. Earth
  - Simon Towers, Co-Chairman, Green Earth Developments Group
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- Glenn Anderson, Co-Founder , Wendling Beck Op-Co LLP
  - Robert Oates, Chief Executive Officer, Arbtech Consulting Ltd
  - Professor Dame EJ Milner-Gulland, Department of Biology, University of Oxford
  - Alexa Culver, General Counsel, RSK Wilding
  - Jonathan Withey, Director, Nature Thrive
  - Alistair Maltby, Managing Director: Commercial, Great Yellow Earth
  - Leah McGimpsey, Group CEO, APEM Group
  - Martin King, Managing Director, Urban Green
  - David Pinder, Chairman, Green Construction Board
  - Jack Potter, Director, Wild Capital
  - Tom Tew, Chief Executive, NatureSpace Partnership