

## NEWS RELEASE

### **LINK calls for independent body to advise Executive on the environment**

Scottish Environment LINK, the umbrella group for Scotland's environmental organisations, is calling for the creation of an independent body to ensure that Scotland is a world leader in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The call follows the introduction to the Scottish Parliament last week of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Bill, which LINK welcomes as a mechanism to protect and improve the Scottish Environment.

Effective SEA is dependent on creating the right delivery mechanisms and a report published today, commissioned by Scottish Environment LINK and written by Dr. Elsa Joao and Anna McLauchlan of the University of Strathclyde, concludes that creating an independent SEA body will be key to ensuring that Scotland is a world leader in SEA. A number of international comparisons are explored including, Canada, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

Lloyd Austin, chair of Scottish Environment LINK said: "This report was commissioned by LINK in order to inform the work of the parliament as it scrutinises this important bill. We hope the committee will consider the author's findings and support our proposal for an independent SEA body with powers which include providing advice, arbitrating in the event of disputes and quality control."

Ends

**For more information, please contact Anne McCall, LINK Planning Task Force Convener on 07980 585377 or Dan Barlow at Friends of the Earth Scotland on 0131 554 9977.**

1. The report was commissioned by LINK but the findings are the authors own. Dr. Elsa Joao is a Lecturer and Director of Research at the University of Strathclyde. Report is available as a pdf on the LINK website [www.scotlink.org](http://www.scotlink.org)