



Scottish  
Environment  
LINK

### **LINK Position Statement: future Scottish independence referendum**

Scottish Environment LINK members are conscious that we have entered a period where questions about Scotland's constitutional arrangements are likely to rise up the political agenda in Scotland. Though there is no current certainty about if or when a referendum will take place, the issue of Scotland's constitutional status could become a prominent part of political conversations in the months ahead. LINK and our members believe that any constitutional questions must be addressed with full awareness of the urgency of the fundamental environmental challenges that will impact on Scotland's future prosperity and wellbeing.

It is vital to recognise that this debate is taking place in the broader context of the nature and climate emergency, where 1 in 9 species in Scotland is at risk of national extinction and where Scotland must deliver ambitious greenhouse gas reductions to take us to net-zero. The Covid-19 pandemic has also increased awareness of nature's importance in our daily lives, of the unequal access to nature-rich green and blue spaces for different communities and individuals in Scotland and the need for a human right to a healthy environment. Following the UK's exit from the EU questions remain as to how arrangements for managing and improving the environment will be taken forward; these must be addressed as part of the debate.

As a result of these pressures, we believe that, if a referendum date is agreed, both sides of any future independence referendum campaign must make clear why their preferred constitutional option will provide the best results for Scotland's environment, on land and at sea, reduce our carbon emissions and drive nature's recovery. Both sides must also set out how their proposals will ensure Scotland maintains or exceeds EU standards with which Scotland is committed to keep pace.

Scottish Environment LINK is committed to pursuing an ambitious environmental agenda irrespective of any referendum outcome. If a referendum is confirmed in the coming months, we will publish our vision for the future of Scotland's environment and will be asking those advocating a preferred outcome to the referendum to set out how they would best deliver our aspirations for Scotland's environment.

*This statement is supported by the following LINK members:*

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation  
Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland  
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group  
Bat Conservation Trust  
Butterfly Conservation Scotland  
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management  
Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland  
Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Froglife  
Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust  
Marine Conservation Society



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North East Mountain Trust  
Nourish Scotland  
Ramblers Scotland  
RSPB Scotland  
Scottish Badgers  
Scottish Campaign for National Parks  
Scottish Countryside Rangers Association  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Trees for Life  
Woodland Trust Scotland