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Edward Mountian MSP
Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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12th October 2023

Dear Edward

I am writing to advise that today we have launched the nominations phase of the process to designate at least one new National Park during the lifetime of this Parliament.

Earlier this year I invited communities to register early interest in their area becoming a new National Park and we have had a very positive response. Communities and organisations across the country are now invited to develop and submit their proposals to the Scottish Government by 29 February 2024.

Proposals should be founded upon local community demand. They should also set out how a National Park would bring positive benefits to the environment and economy by supporting progressive development, addressing the biodiversity and climate crises and improving public and community wellbeing.

We have published detailed guidance on the nomination and appraisal process on the [Scottish Government website](#). Support will be available for any group looking to explore or take forward a proposal.

In Spring 2024 all nominations will be appraised against the criteria set out in the appraisal framework. These broad criteria are:

- outstanding national importance
- size, character and coherence
- meeting the special needs of the area
- strategic contribution
- visitor management and tourism
- local support

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The appraisal process will inform the decision on which area or areas should go forward for designation as a new National Park. In Summer 2024 we will commission a detailed reporter investigation into the area or areas selected to be designated as a new National Park including further local consultation. Based on the outcome of that investigation we would expect to bring forward legislation in 2025 in order to designate at least one new National Park by 2026.

As ever, please do share any comments or questions which the Committee has on this process. I have written to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee and the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee in similar terms.

Yours sincerely

LORNA SLATER

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