

Finlay Carson MSP

Convenor

Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee

5 October 2022



Dear Finlay,

Misrepresentation in stage one report for Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill

Thank you to you, committee members, and clerks for your work on the stage one report for the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill. Overall, it gives a clear and accurate summary of the evidence you heard, and we appreciate the time taken to write it.

However, on one point the report misrepresents what I said during oral evidence. I would like this correction of that misunderstanding to go on the record please.

In the part of the report related to section 7 of the Bill, it states:

“OneKind highlighted a “little bit of a discrepancy” whereby the Bill provides for up to two dogs to search for and retrieve a wild mammal which has been killed but does not mention an animal which has been wounded.”

And in the boxed recommendations:

“The Committee notes the point raised by OneKind that the Bill does not seem to provide for the use of two dogs to search for and retrieve a wild mammal which has been injured. The Committee requests the Scottish Government address this point in advance of Stage 2.”

The comments referred to were actually made relating to section 6 of the Bill, not 7. More importantly, although I mentioned the use of dogs to locate a wounded wild mammal, I did not speak of “retrieving” a wounded mammal. I believe that this language has been taken directly from the Bill: sections 3, 6 and 7 all allow for a person to use one or two dogs to “search for and retrieve a wild mammal which has been killed as a result of the activity.” While using dogs to retrieve a dead animal is not an animal welfare concern, doing so to a wounded animal is, and is not something that OneKind supports.

My comments are in column 38 of the official report of the evidence session. I said:

“I want to pick up on Mike Flynn’s point and say that we agree with him that there is no justification for an exception for sport. [...] There also seems to be a little bit of a discrepancy in relation to the situation in which a wounded deer needs to be tracked by dogs, which has been brought up a couple of times. We concede that that is necessary. If deer are being shot for management purposes and one is wounded, it might need to be tracked by a dog for welfare reasons. However, that does not seem to be covered in the bill—the bill talks about

flushing to guns or locating an animal that has been killed, but it does not mention an animal that has been wounded. That should maybe be looked at."

To reiterate, OneKind is opposed to the exception to allow the use of dogs to provide "quarry" for sport, which is the main purpose of section 6. In the policy memorandum for the Bill, one of the examples given for an additional use of this section would be to *"permit the use of a dog to locate a deer that has been shot and wounded so that it can be humanely despatched."* Although we disagree with the rest of this section, we do acknowledge that this specific use of dogs, to locate a wounded deer, is necessary for the deer's own welfare. However, the current wording of the Bill does not seem to allow for it, despite it being given as an example.

This was the quite specific point I was trying to make, and I do not wish this point to be extrapolated any further. I certainly did not make any reference to the use of dogs to retrieve a wounded animal, and this is not something we would support.

Please get in touch if any further clarification is needed. I would appreciate this letter being circulated and referenced as necessary to ensure that the record is amended.

Yours sincerely,

Kirsty Jenkins

Policy Officer, OneKind