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Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company (Co. No. SC109126) incorporated in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.

Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

Dr Aileen McLeod,

Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform,

The Scottish Government,

Holyrood,

Edinburgh

Glasgow

Dear Minister,

In his article "Beavers and young suffering slow painful deaths in landowner shooting cull" (Sunday Herald 31st January 2016) Rob Edwards highlighted the cruelty involved in the killing of beavers in the Tayside area. You will find the article on the following link:

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/environment/14242587.Beavers_and_young_suffering_slow_painful_deaths_in_landowner_shooting_cull/

It has been proven that lactating Tayside beavers have been killed thus leaving their young to a slow, painful death from starvation.

In the article a Scottish Government spokeswoman is quoted as saying that you " ... will be taking time to consider the issue carefully and listen to the views of stakeholders before making a decision on the future of beavers in Scotland."

Quite frankly you do not have time to consider the issue carefully as it is likely the small population of Tayside beavers will be cruelly wiped out before any consideration and consultation is completed. Please act to protect them now and then you will have time to consider, consult and ascertain if they are having a positive or negative impact on our river systems. It would also make sense to try and establish

what the beaver population is in the area in question. It is likely that many of them will have been displaced or killed during recent flooding.

If, after consultation and due consideration, it is decided to control beaver numbers in Tayside that can then be tackled in a humane, organised, licensed and policed operation.

I would suggest that if the beaver are protected now it would give you time to consider extending any consultation to include the possibility of legislating to protect other creatures from a slow, painful death caused by year round culling. Many native wild animals in Scotland have little or no legal protection. Indeed the Scottish Government removed the one sliver of protection afforded seals under the Conservation of Seals Act 1970 which greatly restricted the right of angling bodies to shoot seals in the breeding seasons. Now anyone with a Government license can shoot seals all year round leaving pups to starve to death when lactating mother seals are killed.

Deer, grey squirrels and other animals and birds can also be legally killed during their breeding seasons causing cruel deaths for dependant young.

I ask you to bring in emergency legislation to stop the killing of all beaver in Scotland and to take the time required to hold a full consultation to consider the welfare, conservation and other implications of the culling of beaver and other animals in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,

Animal Concern