

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary

28th February 2020

Dear Home Secretary

Home Office consultation on strengthening police powers to deal with unauthorised encampments

As organisations committed to enabling more people to enjoy the benefits of nature and the outdoors, we are deeply concerned about government's intention to change trespass rules. The current proposals could have the unintended consequence of deterring people from accessing the countryside, particularly taken alongside the Conservative Party manifesto commitment to criminalising intentional trespass. This needs an urgent rethink.

We believe that government's priority should be to make it easier for people to get outside, enjoy the benefits of walking and connect to the natural environment. Promoting access to the outdoors is a critical part of our response to the climate emergency, poor air quality, high levels of obesity and physical inactivity, and the mental health crisis.

We oppose any measures that would deter people from accessing the outdoors: engaging with nature and enjoying the countryside should not put you at risk of committing a crime. That's why we're writing to seek: 1) urgent clarification on the governments long-term plans around the criminalisation of trespass, and; 2) public commitment not to introduce measures that would limit people's access to and enjoyment of the outdoors, and to working with organisations such as ours to ensure this is not the case.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Tompion Platt, Director of Advocacy & Engagement, The Ramblers

With:

Dominic Dyer, CEO, Badger Trust

David Joy, CEO, British Canoeing

Mark Weston, Director of Access, British Horse Society

Dr Catherine Flitcroft, Access and Conservation Officer, British Mountaineering Council

Peter Hart, Chief Executive, British Orienteering

Tim Wheeler, Chairman, Canoe Camping Club

Crispin Truman, CEO, CPRE, the countryside charity

Roger Geffen, Policy Director, Cycling UK

Toos van Noordwijk, Director of Science, Policy and Innovation, EarthWatch Institute

Martin Sims, Director of Investigations, League Against Cruel Sports

David Morgan, Chair, Long Distance Walkers Association

Dr Robert Macfarlane, writer

Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary, Open Spaces Society

Steve Oram, Biodiversity Officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species

Jenny Hawley, Policy Manager, Plantlife

Lisa Wainwright, CEO, Sport and Recreation Alliance

Jane Nickerson, CEO, Swim England

Jerry Swift, Chairman, The British Kite Flying Association

John Vanuffel, Technical Director, The Trail Riders Fellowship

Dr Mark Avery, Director, Wild Justice

Please reply to: Gemma Cantelo, The Ramblers, 2nd Floor Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW, gemma.cantelo@ramblers.org.uk



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