

**If you are concerned by
THE ONGOING LOSS OF THE OPEN MOORS AND HILLS OF SCOTLAND
Please sign this Charter**

**Charter
for the
Open Hill**

www.hill-charter.scot



“We, the undersigned, request that the Scottish Government takes steps to retain the remaining, unfragmented areas of open hill in Scotland through the identification of the key areas to be safeguarded for future generations.”

The Charter, together with the signatures, will be presented to Scottish Ministers in early 2027

It has been created by individuals, independent of any organisation, who are concerned that the Government is making no effort to retain the open hills which characterise Scotland

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The charter can be signed-up online at www.hill-charter.scot
or by scanning the QR code
A sign-up form for group events can be downloaded from the website



Further information overleaf

BACKGROUND TO THE CHARTER FOR THE OPEN HILL

Protecting the hills and moors of the Scottish uplands

The landscape of Scotland, particularly of the Highlands, is renowned for the beauty of its scenery: mountains rising out of stark windswept moorland; the moorland itself changing to a glorious shade of purple when the heather is in flower in late summer; steep streams falling down the mountains in times of spate; glens with meandering rivers; long straight lochs deepened by ice in the distant past; lochs open to the sea, often reaching far inland; an island-studded coast of cliffs, headlands, rocky shores, and sandy bays; a human imprint of ruined castles, ancient fields and white-painted houses.

The great thing about these landscapes is that they are easily visible: the treeless moors and hillsides allow for distant vistas, often of wild land without a structure or building in site. Where else can you see this in Europe?

Unfortunately we are losing these vistas: windfarms are breaking-up the skyline, trees are being planted on the open moorland, roads now often hide their views behind a belt of trees or a forest plantation, structures such as windfarms are being seen everywhere. Windfarms have their place, and many views are enhanced by the presence of trees: but not everywhere. In fact research shows that the open moorland of Scotland has not been created by the cutting down ancient forests, but has developed naturally over the millennia: there is an unbroken ecological link back to the Ice Age – a situation now rare in Europe. This makes it a very special landscape.

The stunning views which draw people to the area are slowly being lost. **And nothing is being done about it.** Would you still visit the Highlands and Islands if all you saw were trees and windfarms? The **Charter of the Open Hill** aims to persuade the Scottish Government to have policies in place to safeguard the iconic views of moorland and mountain which so characterise our uplands. It is based on the following six premises:

- 1) Recognising the contribution of the open landscape of hills and moors to the history, culture and identity of Scotland
- 2) Recognising the importance to the tourist industry of the wide vistas across open landscapes, and the importance to local employment through the management of moorland
- 3) Recognising the international importance and rarity of Scottish moorland habitats
- 4) Recognising the natural origins of the open, unwooded hills and moors
- 5) Recognising the current threats to the open hill, in particular its fragmentation through forestry and woodland planting
- 6) Recognising, also, the ever-increasing infrastructure being imposed on moorland, including vehicle tracks, wind farms, dams, reservoirs, power-lines and masts

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Is this too much to ask?