



## Don't Bulldoze the Protected Landscapes Duty

**Scrapping this vital law would be the biggest backward step for nature and National Parks in 25 years. MPs and Peers must ensure this doesn't happen – defend our landscapes and their legacy.**

### The Duty and why it matters

The Protected Landscapes duty, introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, was the most significant legal step forward for National Parks and National Landscapes in a generation. For the first time ever, the law required all public bodies to actively “seek to further” the purposes of our most special landscapes. This means that decisions on water, housing, farming, transport, tourism and many more must all contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage, and opportunities for public enjoyment.

The Duty also helps the UK deliver on nature recovery, climate resilience, and international commitments like ‘30x30’ (protecting and managing 30% of our land & sea for nature by 2030).

**We are concerned the Government may scrap the Duty through a final amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. With no official confirmation yet, now is the critical moment to urge Secretary of State Steve Reed and other Ministers to rethink.**

**This horrendous decision** would unravel years of careful policy development, evidence-gathering, and cross-party consensus, and it would land a blow to the credibility of the UK's environmental leadership.

### The rationale for introducing the Duty was clear and widely accepted:

- **Political consensus:** The legislation passed with support from all parties, and was championed from Labour benches as part of Labour's tradition of leadership on environmental protection.
- **Independent review:** The 2019 Glover Review recommended reform, having found that National Parks and National Landscapes were failing to meet their potential for nature and people.
- **Public demand:** The change followed multiple public consultations, which showed overwhelming support for National Parks and stronger protections for nature.

**The Duty is already beginning to have a positive effect.** Early evidence from Natural England, Defra, the National Parks, and the High Court shows that the Duty works in parallel with the planning system. When applied correctly, with public bodies considering the Duty early and following official guidance, it provides clarity and consistency. Far from delaying planning decisions, it can streamline decision-making by ensuring environmental obligations are addressed upfront rather than contested later.

# Why Parliament Must Defend the Protected Landscapes Duty

**National Parks and National Landscapes are the crown jewels of the nation's countryside**, attracting millions of visitors every year and contributing significantly to rural economies, tourism, and public health. They are also globally recognised as iconic symbols of Britain's cultural and natural heritage.

In December 2024, Government Ministers themselves celebrated the Duty as part of the 75th anniversary of Labour's 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. **To consider dismantling it now would betray that legacy and send a dangerous message that nature and landscapes can be downgraded.**

## What MPs and Peers Should Press For:

1. **Tell Ministers: Keep the Duty intact.** Do not allow it to be watered down or repealed.
2. **Speak up in Parliament.** Raise this issue by tabling a Parliamentary Question.
3. **Show your support.** Attend the launch of the new National Parks and National Landscapes APPG on 21st October, 4–6pm, in Room N of Portcullis House.
4. **Implement promised regulations.** Ministers committed to clarifying exactly what public bodies must do to comply with the Duty. That promise must be honoured.

## Why This Is a Fight Worth Having

The Landscapes Duty is transformational and enjoys widespread support. Hundreds of environmental organisations, community groups, and millions of members of the public recognise its importance and **are determined that it will not be weakened or undermined**. The Duty delivers cleaner rivers, better public transport for rural communities, more wildlife and biodiversity recovery across public land, stronger local economies based on sustainable tourism and farming, and fairer public access to nature for all.

**Parliament has a clear role to play: holding Ministers to account, ensuring the Duty is not quietly dismantled, and speaking up for nature, communities, and the National Park legacy.**

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