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Government withdraws consultation document

Minister accepts public and MP's were "not happy" with forest proposals

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the statement

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As I am sure you will have heard the Government has withdrawn the public consultation document about the future of our forests and woodlands. In her statement to the House of Commons, the Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman said

"....it is clear from the early responses to the consultation that the public, and many Honourable Members, are not happy with the proposals that we set out." Mrs Spelman went on to add "I am sorry, we got this one wrong—but we have listened to people's concerns."

I believe it was a courageous statement to make and many people have already said how refreshing it is to hear a politician admit they have made a mistake and say sorry.

Thank you for contacting me and letting me know your views; there is no doubt that because you and many, many other people took the trouble to contact your MP, the consultation document has been withdrawn.

As you may remember from my previous email, I had my own concerns about the proposals and promised to continue to lobby at the highest level and to represent your views. I had already had two meetings with the Secretary of State and last week raised the issue in a meeting with the Prime Minister. I had little doubt the consultation document would be withdrawn though I thought it would come at the end of the twelve week consultation.

The Secretary of State also announced she is setting up an independent panel to look at the future of our publicly owned forests, which will report to her by the autumn, Mrs Spelman said

"The panel will advise me on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England, and on the role of the Forestry Commission and the public forest estate. The panel



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will include representatives of key environmental and access organisations, alongside representatives of the forestry industry. ”

I am very pleased with today’s announcement and want to thank you again for contacting me with your views.

With best wishes,

Anna Soubry

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