Written evidence submitted by Elizabeth Whittaker

I am writing to express my views on your arguments for wanting to make it illegal to release grey squirrels into the wild.

1/ The numbers of grey squirrels rescued and released is very low in comparison to the total number of them, so making this illegal will have no significant overall effect. It will however cause immense upset to the compassionate people of the UK who love wildlife. They find an injured or abandoned grey squirrel and the choice is to leave it alone or take it to a vet/ wildlife centre. In either case, THE SQUIRREL WILL DIE. Horrific! Please do not make this the case.

2/ You are saying this measure is to help red squirrels. But red squirrels are not an endangered species. Those in Britain today only thrive because of artificial measures to help them. I am glad you are doing this, of course but red squirrels will thrive where the habitat is right for them—parts of Scotland for example. Even if you eradicate grey squirrels entirely—god forbid—reds will not survive in most areas of Britain.

3/ The pox virus is another false reason being used to justify your plans. But this is responsible for only a small percentage of red squirrel deaths and in any case, is more likely to be caught from fellow red squirrels living in too close proximity in the environments you have artificially created, than it is from grey squirrels.

Please reconsider and keep Britain a nation that loves its wildlife, rather than kills it.

Thank you

May 2019