Written evidence submitted by Pete Coleman

“URBAN SQUIRRELS”

As you may be aware there are plans to revoke release licences for alien invasive animal species from this coming October.

Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centres will be forced to either kill or permanently keep orphaned or injured wildlife that are covered by this new legislation.

As you can probably imagine the thought of killing an otherwise healthy animal that would normally survive and go on to be released back into the wild to live a full and normal life is abhorrent to those who dedicate their lives to help our beloved wildlife. Rescue centres also cannot commit to keeping these animals for the rest of their natural lives as the required secure housing and feeding costs would be prohibitive especially for those that rely on public donations for their survival.

There are several species on the “kill” list but the one I am most concerned about is the Eastern Grey Squirrel.

I work for “Urban Squirrels” who are based in London and our sole reason for being is the rescue and rehabilitation of orphaned and/or injured grey squirrels, we are currently licenced to handle 12 squirrels.

We have started a government petition against this draconian legislation which has garnered over 57,800 signatures so far. This can be referenced here: https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/235425

Currently there is an online discussion hosted by the British Parliament asking for the members of the public to air their views on the “Invasive Species" subject. A vast majority are commenting in support of Grey Squirrels saying that they should be left alone as they have been resident here for over 150 years and bring so much pleasure to people living in towns and cities that would otherwise not have any interaction with our wildlife.

One user posted what can only be described as a vitriolic attack on Grey Squirrels under the pseudonym of “URBAN SQUIRRELS “ I am extremely cross that someone should stoop so low as to use our good name to deride what we actually do.

Here is the link to the discussion site:
https://parliament.trydiscourse.com/c/eac

Here is a link to an online poll asking about people’s views about how Squirrels in general have influenced their lives:

https://survey.app.do/view/2aWP2z36a962LHWHSpSF7AU3

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