

## News from the Scottish Labour Party in the Highlands and Islands

Peter Peacock MSP

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### Scottish Government leaves flood funding uncertainty

The government faced serious criticism in rejecting a unanimous parliament committee recommendation which would have guaranteed funding to pay for flood schemes.

The criticism came during a debate on flooding in the Scottish Parliament today following a call by the environment committee to recreate the government budget that helped pay up to 80 percent of a local authority costs in building flood defences.

The criticism followed the Environment Minister Richard Lochhead ruling out changes recommended by the Parliament's Environment Committee to current funding arrangements.

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP Peter Peacock said:

"The Minister had the opportunity to remove any doubt over funding flood protection works which have been raised by Moray Council's Director of Finance and he failed to do so.

"I made clear my disappointment at his decision, I told him I thought he was wrong, and urged him to reconsider.

"I hope he will still do so and back the unanimous decision of the Parliament Committee.

"I will be happy to support changes in legislation to improve flood management, but I will use the legislation coming to keep arguing for Moray Council to be guaranteed the support it needs.

"I want to see fair flood funding for Moray and will campaign hard for this."

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Notes to editors

The SNP Government ended the previous funding arrangements for flood funding where Councils could get up to 80% of the costs back from Government.

Instead the previous flooding fund has been largely distributed between Councils in Scotland, leaving Moray with a current shortfall and future uncertainty, as set out in a report from the Director of Finance to the Council recently.

This is a link to the report for your reference:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/rae/reports-08/rur08-02-01.htm>

web links :

Peter Peacock : [www.peterpeacock.org.uk](http://www.peterpeacock.org.uk)

Rhoda Grant : [www.rhodagrants.org.uk](http://www.rhodagrants.org.uk)

David Stewart : [www.davidstewart.org.uk](http://www.davidstewart.org.uk)

Highlands and Islands Labour : [www.handilabour.org.uk](http://www.handilabour.org.uk)