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## Peter Peacock

Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

16 May 2008

### Minister refuses extra support for Islands

A call in Parliament, by Labour MSP, Peter Peacock, for extra support for the islands following the refusal of the Lewis Windpower planning application has been refused by SNP Enterprise Minister Jim Mather.

Peter Peacock pressed the Minister during Parliamentary questions to recognise the economic fragility of the islands and the loss of economic opportunity following the blocking of the Lewis windfarm development by the SNP government.

He asked the Minister to guarantee:

- the HIE budget for the Islands would not be cut, but increased
- increased capital spending to the local authority to allow further investment in vital infrastructure to support development, and
- urged him to invest more with the RSPB and others in the important habitat of the moorland, better interpretation to support more tourism opportunities, given the application had been refused on environmental grounds.

Peter Peacock said:

"The Minister refused to guarantee there would be no cuts in the HIE budget for the Islands and he wouldn't back more cash for the Islands through HIE or the Council.

"He also refused to back my call for more investment and better interpretation of the natural habitat he is seeking to protect in an effort to attract more tourists.

"The Minister displayed he has no ideas on how to support the Islands economy and is offering no money to recognise the gap left by his decision to block economic development.

"The Islands deserve better."

**Ends**

**Website links**

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

**Western Isles Labour** : [www.westernisleslabour.org.uk](http://www.westernisleslabour.org.uk)