



Janet Finch-Saunders AC/AM

Aelod Cynulliad dros Aberconwy

Assembly Member for Aberconwy



Mark Drakeford AM,
First Minister,
Welsh Government,
By Email

21 August 2019
Ref: MJ/JF357

Private and Confidential

Re: Snowdonia National Park Authority

Dear First Minister,

Office of Janet Finch-Saunders AM,
29 Madoc Street,
Llandudno,
LL30 2TL.
01492 871 198

National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.
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I am writing with regards to the funding allocated to Snowdonia National Park Authority.

In the letter I sent you dated 22 July 2019 I highlighted the fact that the proposed half a million cut in funding from your Welsh Government poses one of the greatest threats to the continued operation of our world famous National Park. Indeed, as you will recall, it is foreseen that the 11% reduction in funding would, for example, result in paths on Snowdon not being repaired; closure of all three information centres; the end of the Sherpa bus; closure of public toilets; loss of staff; and serious questions about the financial robustness of the Authority.

As I have explained in previous correspondence the above changes are a major threat to the Authority's ability to achieve your Welsh Government's priorities for national parks in Wales, such as the expectation in *Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks*, for Authorities to encourage, provide for and manage responsible outdoor recreation opportunities, and working towards the provision of fit for purpose places and facilities which are consistent in standard with the spectacular landscapes they serve.

Having read the letter you sent me dated 13 August 2019, I welcome our common recognition of the value of our Parks in protecting our landscapes, supporting farming, and promoting biodiversity and tourism. However, your apparent hesitation to explain how the Authority can achieve your priorities for National Parks with your proposed £500,000 cut causes me to question why when you recognise the value of the Authority, your Welsh Government is considering a reduction which would directly undermine the responsibilities undertaken by the National Park.

[Cont...]

Mi wnaiff Janet Finch-Saunders cadw unrhyw wybodaeth bersonol yn gwbl gyfrinachol, ac fel arfer mi fydd rhaid iddi rannu'r wybodaeth 'efo aelodau o staff i'w galluogi nhw i ddelfio 'efo'r awdurdodau perthnasol er mwyn eich helpu a'ch cynorthwyo chi. Efallai mi fydd angen i rywun ysgrifennu atoch er mwyn darparu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf o bwys. Gadwch wybod i ni os nad oes diddordeb gennych mewn cael eich cysylltu at y diben hwn.

Janet Finch-Saunders will treat in confidence any personal information which you may pass on to her, and she will normally allow her staff to see it, so that they can consult with relevant authorities in order to help and advise you. We may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let us know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

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—
Assembly Member for Aberconwy



[Cont...]

You have noted in your letter to me that 'Any additional protection for the Parks can only be provided by reductions in the budgets of other services'. Undoubtedly, I do not believe that I have asked for additional protection. As a minimum, what I am pursuing is assurances that you will not allow the finance allocated to Snowdonia National Park Authority to be cut any further, and therefore, not pursue the half a million cut. I believe that the information I have provided clearly proves why this needs to be the case. As such, I would be grateful if you could expedite the consideration of the financial information provided to you by the Authority so that greater clarity about future funding can be given urgently. Indeed, it is not only the continued operation of the National Park which is at risk here, but the excellent reputation of the area which is at the heart of the Welsh tourist industry.

Yours sincerely

Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC