

Andrew Muir MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly
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By email only

7 November 2025

Dear Minister

The future of environmental governance in Northern Ireland

Green Alliance strongly supports the recommendations of the independent review of environmental governance in Northern Ireland.

We agree that an independent environmental protection agency for Northern Ireland, configured as a non-departmental public body and supported by a civil society advisory committee, is a missing part of Northern Ireland's governance.

Consecutive reviews dating back to the 1990s have concluded that greater independence is key in securing consistently better environmental outcomes. This is now an urgent imperative given the ongoing environmental harms occurring in many parts of the country, including Lough Neagh.

We support the review's other recommendations and hope that these can be progressed in this Mandate, including a map of environmental governance to clarify roles and responsibilities and a new environmental audit committee for the Northern Ireland Assembly.

We would also like to see progress on legally binding targets on nature recovery, using whichever legislative vehicle might be best suited for that. This would reflect public and cross-party support for ambitious action on the environment. Embedding nature recovery targets in law across the UK, even though details will vary across each jurisdiction, will enable a four nation approach to furthering international agreements such as the global biodiversity framework.

Finally, the independent review notes the important role that the Environmental Principles Policy Statement will play in informing policy making. We hope that this is published without further delay.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Chambers

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Senior fellow

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**Leadership
for the environment**



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