

Environment Bill

AMENDMENT
TO BE MOVED
ON REPORT

After Clause 110

BARONESS YOUNG OF OLD SCONE

Insert the following new Clause—

Duty to implement an enhanced protection standard for ancient woodland in England

- (1) The Government must implement an enhanced protection standard for ancient woodland, hereafter referred to as the “ancient woodland standard” in England as set out in subsections (2), (3) and (4) and this shall have immediate effect.
- (2) The ancient woodland standard shall set out the steps necessary to prevent further loss of ancient woodland in England.
- (3) The ancient woodland standard commits the Government to adopting a standard of protection which shall be a requirement for all companies, persons or organisations involved in developments affecting ancient woodlands in England.
- (4) This standard shall be that,
 - (a) Any development that causes direct loss to ancient woodland or ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees shall be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons. In addition, a suitable compensation strategy must be in place prior to development commencing.
 - (b) Any development adjacent to ancient woodland must incorporate a minimum 50-metre buffer to provide protection, reduce indirect damage and provide space for natural regeneration.
 - (c) Any ancient or veteran trees must be retained within a development site, including a root protection area and appropriate buffer zone.
- (5) This buffer should be whichever is greater of,
 - (a) an area which is a radius of 15 times the diameter of the tree with no cap.
 - (b) 5 metres beyond the crown.

Member's explanatory statement

This amendment is intended to address the more than 800 ancient woodlands in England that are currently threatened by development. As a large number of these threats result from indirect effects of development next to ancient woodland, these changes will improve the weight afforded to protecting these irreplaceable habitats in planning policy.

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6 August 2021
