

Ruth Hatton
Deputy Clerk,
Legislation Office,
National Assembly for Wales

(By email)
Ruth.hatton@wales.gsi.gov.uk

19 May 2014

Dear Ruth,

Thank you for inviting me to give oral evidence on behalf of Natural Resources Wales to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in respect of your inquiry into the disqualification of membership from the National Assembly for Wales. As I have confirmed to the Committee Clerk I am able to attend on 2 June.

Ahead of my attendance, I have a few general points to make that may be helpful:

We suggest that some basic principles can guide the final decisions on the rules governing this issue and would propose the following as important:

- Rules should be designed to encourage participation and any barriers should be proportionate;
- Rules should be designed to deal with perceived conflicts as well as real ones;
- Rules should be clear and unambiguous;
- Rules should distinguish between individuals who are disqualified and office holders who are disqualified.

By way of illustration from our own context, we would suggest that there would be significant perception of a conflict of interest if one of our Board Members were to become an Assembly Member and remain as a Board Member. By contrast, if a member of staff were to become an Assembly Member, then we would suggest the perception issues could be appropriately managed during the period of an election and/or during a period of elected office, through resignation with guaranteed re-appointment if not elected and a career break if elected.

I hope these suggestions prove helpful in advance of my attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Ein cyf/Our ref:
Eich cyf/Your ref:

Ty Cambria / Cambria House
29 Heol Casnewydd / 29 Newport Road
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF24 0TP / CF24 0TP

Ebost/Email:
Emyr.roberts@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
Emyr.roberts@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Ffôn/Phone:
0300 065 4444

Handwritten signature of Emyr Roberts in black ink.

Emyr Roberts

**Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive**