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His Majesty The King
Buckingham Palace
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8 September 2024

Sir,
I am pleased to note media reports indicating you are to host a summit on artificial intelligence later this month at Dumfries House, in collaboration with the Ditchley Foundation.

Action to Protect Rural Scotland, founded in 1926 alongside our sister organisation, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, has taken a keen interest in the implications of the infrastructure currently proposed across Scotland to support large language model training and inference - what the industry calls “hyperscale data centres”.

Those hyperscale data centres currently in the Scottish planning system would require 7.2GW of power, much more than twice the current peak in electricity demand of c. 4.2GW across Scotland. Despite some small steps taken over summer, such applications are still not, as standard, required to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment. Concerns have also been raised by communities such as Larbert and Auchtertool about local air quality, noise, and loss of vital agricultural land. Information of our work in this area can be found on our website.

We are of course very aware of your longstanding interest and outstanding contribution to rural protection, including through The Royal Countryside Fund. Reports indicate that attendance at your event will also include a representative of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, a welcome participant especially given the Pope’s powerful encyclical letter on the topic earlier this year.

At APRS we are working with many of the community groups discussed above, and would be most grateful if you could consider extending an invitation to one or more of them, or to APRS itself, in order to participate on an equal footing in this important discussion.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Majesty's humble and obedient servant.

Dr Kat Jones
Director
Action to Protect Rural Scotland

President: Patricia Macdonald BSc PhD FRSE FSA(Scot) FRSA HonFRSGS HonFICS

Chair: John Thomson MA MSc FRSA

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