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Dear Lady Hermon

Thank you for your contributions to the debate on the Recall of MPs Bill during its Report Stage in the House of Commons on 24 November. I undertook to write to you about the wording to appear on the petition signing sheet.

During the debate you asked why the two paragraphs of wording prescribed in clause 9(4), for the petition signing sheet, are arranged in that order. I explained that this wording had been discussed with the Electoral Commission to ensure that it is as clear as possible and I suspected that it was felt that this was the clearest way of presenting the information.

I can now confirm that the structure of the wording has been designed to ensure that it firstly provides (in the opening paragraph) all the relevant information about the petition and then gives details about the consequences if a sufficient proportion of constituents sign the petition (in the second paragraph). This approach ensures that the subject of the petition and the purpose of signing it is expressed clearly in the first sentence.

As I mentioned during the debate the wording will be subjected to user-testing. I anticipate a qualitative approach will be used to gather the insights on the petition materials (using an example signing sheet and notice of petition) through focus groups and one to one in-depth interviews. The findings will help us to determine whether the wording of the petition signing sheet needs to be amended, which may be done by regulations if necessary. Additionally, it will enable us to finalise the design of the signing sheet and the notice of petition (which is the equivalent of the poll card at elections).

I trust you will find this letter helpful, a copy of which will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Tom Brake MP**

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

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