Dear Lord Purvis,

Thank you for your contribution to the debate on The Customs Safety and Security Procedures (EU Exit) (No.2) Regulations 2019 on Monday 7 October. During this debate, you asked about the proportion of trade that will be affected by the 12 month transitional period, until 1 November 2020, during which there is no requirement for entry summary declarations for goods imported from territories where the UK does not currently require these declarations. Those territories are EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. I am sorry that I was unable to respond to you at the time and I promised to write to you.

The UK is introducing a temporary easement suspending the requirement for safety and security declarations on imports from EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein in order to give businesses more time to prepare for what would be a new requirement in a no deal exit scenario.

The UK’s imports total £503 billion, of which 58% come from the EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. EU imports are 53% (£266 billion) of the UK’s total imports, those from Norway are 4% (£20 billion), those from Switzerland are 1% (£6 billion), and those from Liechtenstein are less than 0.01% of the UK’s imports (£4.6 million). These figures are based on the UK’s 2018 Overseas Trade (in goods) Statistics.

Presently, we do not receive entry summary declarations for the 58% of imports from the EU, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. The Instrument debated on Monday 7 October, has the effect of extending that position for a further 12 month period in a no deal exit. It does not decrease the proportion of imports for which the UK receives entry summary declarations. As most UK imports arrive from the EU, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, introducing this easement is vital in assisting a significant number of businesses by allowing them more time to prepare for meeting safety and security requirements and to continue the free flow of trade. HMRC is committed to continuing to provide support to businesses to enable them to comply with safety and security requirements once the easement has ended.
The 12 month transitional period will not apply to goods imported from the Rest of the World. The UK will maintain the same level of safety and security during the transitional period as it does now and our border security agencies are resourced in preparation for leaving the EU without a deal.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I have also copied this letter to Lord Tunnicliffe and Baroness Neville-Rolfe and will also place a copy in the House library.

[Signature]

LORD BETHELL

Lord Purvis
House of Lords