



Lord True CBE
Minister of State
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Baroness Hayman of Ullock
House of Lords
London
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26 October 2020

Dear Baroness Hayman,

I am writing to offer further explanation on the points you raised, during the Second Reading of the UK Internal Market (UKIM) Bill on 19 October, in relation to environmental standards.

We have repeatedly stated our commitment to high standards, which are neither dependent on EU membership nor on what is agreed in Free Trade Agreements we sign with other countries. This Bill does not change that commitment, and under our proposals the devolved administrations will continue to have power to regulate within devolved areas, in so far as these do not cause a barrier to internal trade.

We are committed to being a global leader in environmental protection, setting ambitious targets to prevent damage to our natural world, that build on our strong environmental record. The UK was the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the economy by 2050; we have been quick to take action against single-use plastic; and we introduced a microbead ban in January 2018, a landmark step in the introduction of one of the world's toughest bans on these harmful pieces of plastic. The EU did not move to introduce an equivalent ban until 2019.

We have also set out a range of new policies in the Environment Bill that are designed to further drive up environmental standards in line with the UK's priorities.

We have long recognised the value in four nation cooperation to keep our standards high and current, that's one reason all four administrations jointly started the Common Frameworks programme. Frameworks provide a mechanism for maintaining high regulatory standards and the majority of frameworks will directly address regulatory standards, either establishing common strategic objectives, making reference to existing agreements or setting out agreed minimum standards. The programme promotes effective intergovernmental relations and respects the devolution settlements with structures that provide a consensus-based process for accommodating divergence.

As an example, the Hazardous Substances (Planning) Framework establishes a basis for continued UK-wide cooperation regarding the control of substances that are potentially harmful to health or the environment. The hazardous substances regime involves close cooperation between the UK Government, devolved administrations, local authorities, and consultation bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive in order to prevent any on-shore major accidents involving hazardous substances, as well as effectively limiting the potential consequences of any accidents that might take place.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the debate, congratulate you on your maiden speech and welcome you once again to the House of Lords.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas True". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lord True CBE