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BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST
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29 March 2023

Dear Sue,

During the Shark Fins Bill, Second Reading on Friday 24 March, I promised to write to you on the question you raised about the Animals Abroad Bill measures.

We are supporting Private Member's Bills banning trade in detached shark fins, the import of hunting trophies and the advertising here of low-welfare animal experiences abroad. These are all making good progress through parliament. In addition, the Ivory Act 2018 was brought into force in June 2022 to help protect elephants. The Government is continuing to gather information in relation to fur and foie gras. Farming animals for their fur and the practice of force feeding have been illegal here for many years. We're focused on delivering our ambitious animal welfare agenda as quickly and effectively as possible. To ensure we can maximise Parliamentary time and introduce legislation in a timely manner, we will continue to introduce legislation for individual reforms as soon as we are able.

As outlined in our 2021 Action Plan for Animal Welfare, the Government has an ambitious agenda for animal welfare and conservation reforms, which we plan to take forward during the current Parliamentary session and beyond. We will continue to introduce and support legislative and non-legislative reforms when we can.

The measures in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill bring forward the domestic animal welfare proposals within the Action Plan, including three manifesto commitments to crack down on puppy smuggling, ban live exports for fattening and slaughter and ban the keeping of primates as pets. This Bill will also provide protection for livestock from out-of-control dogs, establish a new offence of pet abduction and introduce reforms to the zoo licensing regime, improving the welfare of our kept wild animals. The Kept Animals Bill contains a variety of manifesto commitments that we are committed to progressing when Parliamentary time allows. Dates for subsequent stages of the Kept Animals Bill will be announced in the usual way.

We have already delivered on several other commitments made within the Action Plan. We have increased the penalties for those convicted of animal cruelty and passed the Animal (Sentience) Act 2022. We have provided for penalty notices to apply to animal welfare offences, introduced new police powers to tackle hare coursing, and banned glue traps.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to those Peers who spoke in the debate and place a copy in the House library.

Yours ever
Olivier

BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST

Baroness Hayman of Ullock
House of Lords