

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

14 May 2019

Dear Lesley

Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Agriculture Bill

Thank you for your letter, dated 26 March covering the Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Agriculture Bill.

The Committee had an initial discussion on the Supplementary LCM at its meeting on 8 May and agreed I should write seeking further assurances from you in relation to the Secretary of State's powers under **Part 7 of the Bill (World Trade Organisation Agreement on Agriculture)**.

In our report on the first LCM, we raised concern about the powers, in particular those which would enable the Secretary of State to determine the classification of agricultural support across the UK, and set limits on levels of domestic support.

We note the *UK and Welsh Government Bilateral Agreement on WTO provisions within the Agriculture Bill* ('the Agreement'), which sets out the governance mechanism for use of the Secretary of State's powers under Part 7. We remain to be convinced that the Agreement is sufficiently robust to ensure that the Welsh interest is properly considered or safeguarded. **We seek further assurance from you on this matter.** You told this Committee that "a commitment to consult is insufficient given the importance of this matter". However, on the face of it, the Agreement describes a process consisting of the Secretary of State consulting



Welsh Ministers. We would be grateful to know how the agreement ensures an appropriate level of engagement, above and beyond consultation.

In our report, we called for the Welsh Government to pursue with the UK Government an amendment to the WTO provisions, to provide the Welsh Ministers and other devolved administrations with a clear role in determining classification of financial support and spending limits. **We would like you to clarify whether you have pursued this matter with the UK Government, and to provide details of the outcome. If you have not pursued this matter, we would like you to outline your reasons for this.**

Finally, on a related matter, it would be helpful if you could provide an indication of when the Committee can expect a response from the Welsh Government to its report on the first LCM.

As you know, the reporting deadline for reporting on the Supplementary LCM is **11 June**. Given this, I should be grateful if you would respond as soon as possible, and by **24 May**, in order to enable the Committee to take account of your response in its report.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Hedges AM

Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

