

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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27 June 2022

Dear Elin

The UK Government introduced the Genetic Technologies (Precision Breeding) Bill to the House of Commons on 25 May. The Bill is 30 pages long, consists of 48 parts and is complex in nature. The Bill gives effect to a new, divergent policy, which although nominally restricted to England, will have important effects across the whole of the UK. It cuts across devolved areas including plant varieties and seeds, genetic modification and animal health and welfare. It also impacts more widely on the Welsh economy, trade, food and feed safety and public health. It is a framework Bill which provides the Secretary of State with considerable subordinate legislative powers.

There has been no meaningful engagement by UK Ministers at a Ministerial level, and approaches to my officials were only made shortly before the Bill was published. Officials have been presented with limited detail of the UK Government's policy intentions or the likely impacts the Bill will have in Wales.

I am extremely concerned that the UK Government has chosen not to work within the Common Frameworks that are in place in several of these policy areas. These Frameworks have been jointly agreed by the four Governments of the UK and are currently being scrutinised by legislatures across the UK. This departure from the spirit of the Common Frameworks means the consequences for areas which are devolved in Wales have not been properly considered. There will also be wider consequences for the UK internal market, for international trade and for our international obligations.

Due to very limited prior consultation by the UK Government and the complexity of the Bill, it has not yet been possible to fully consider the consequences for Wales. However, once this has been done and we have a clear picture of the devolution consequences for Wales, it may be necessary to lay a Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM).

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We are already outside the normal two-week Standing Order 29 deadline for the laying of an LCM, in part due to the late engagement by UK Government. A draft version of the Bill was only shared with us on the day before its introduction. The Bill is expected to move through the UK Parliament at pace with House of Commons Second reading having taken place on 15 June, Commons Committee stage scheduled to commence on 28 June, and, if passed, the Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent by December 2022.

I am copying this letter to the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, Mick Antoniw MS, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths MS and the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, Huw Irranca-Davies MS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS
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