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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru

18th November 2022

Dear Huw

Thank you for your letter of 2 November 2022, regarding the Energy Prices Bill and the process of inter-governmental working prior with the UK Government.

There was very limited opportunity to engage the UK Government ahead of introduction of the Bill. The announcement on 8 September by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, of the support to be provided to deal with the energy prices, was made without prior discussion at official or Ministerial level. In mid-September, officials were made aware of the need for new legislation to underpin the support announced. There was no detail available at that time.

The outline contents of the Bill was shared with officials on 6 October and the Bill was sent to Ministers and officials on the evening of 11 October, ahead of its introduction into the House of Commons on 12 October. We received a second letter, outlining the UK Government's analysis of the territorial extent of provisions and their assessment of areas within devolved competence, on 12 October. Welsh Government officials made it clear that the lack of advanced sight of the Bill would make it challenging for Ministers and Members of the Senedd to scrutinise the content in line with the usual practice for the legislative content process.

With regards consultation following the Bill's introduction, I responded to the Secretary of State's letter on 18 October, seeking consultation on any measures that engaged the devolution settlement. My officials were also in contact with the UK Government policy teams seeking further detail of the mechanisms being introduced. However, the Bill's passage through the UK Parliament was extremely swift. Following its introduction on 12 October, it was debated for one day in each House before receiving Royal Assent on 25 October. Consequently, there was no opportunity to influence the content of the Bill.

Whilst there was an urgency around this Bill, the pattern of behaviour from UK Government has been similar for other Bills introduced by this UK Government. The lack of meaningful consultation or opportunity to influence drafting is unacceptable. The First Minister raised the UK Government's approach to the Sewel Convention and devolved affairs at his first meeting with the Prime Minister, and we will continue to press UK Government to engage with us effectively.

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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.

I appreciate the frustration expressed by Members of the Senedd about the lack of time afforded to Members to meaningfully scrutinise and influence UK legislation. We share that frustration, and we will continue to make representation to the UK Government in anticipation the change in leadership may result in a more open and constructive intergovernmental relationship going forward.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AS/MS

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