

Lesley Griffiths

Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

Vaughan Gething

Minister for Economy

8 February 2023

Dear Lesley and Vaughan,

Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill

On 25 January the Committee discussed the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill and its associated legislative consent motions. Members are very concerned about the potential impact of the Bill on Wales in the areas covered by our remit. As such we resolved to write to you and find out more information about the Welsh Government's assessment of the Bill's impact on the following sectors: Wales' economy, trade, skills, the agriculture, fisheries and food and drink sectors and animal welfare standards. We'd also be very grateful if you could confirm what work is being done to prepare for the Bill.

Therefore, please can you provide the Committee with:

- Your views on the impact of the Bill on the sectors above and any other areas you think the Committee may be interested in;
- A list of relevant Retained EU Law (REUL) made by Welsh Ministers within your remits;
- Your plans to use the Bill's powers in relation to standards within this Committee's remit, such as animal welfare;
- Information on what discussions you have had with other governments in the UK about the impact of the Bill on matters within the Committee's remit and whether/how any changes to relevant REUL might be coordinated, if the Bill is passed;



- Details of any impact on the Welsh Government’s legislative plans where related to the Committee’s remit;
- Your views on how the Bill might interact with post-Brexit international trade agreements;
- Your views on the Bill’s potential impact on intra-UK trade, including its operation alongside the Internal Market Act 2020; and
- Your views on how the Bill might interact with common frameworks within the remit of this Committee.

Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee undertook a [call for evidence](#) following the Bill’s introduction. Members discussed the evidence provided to this consultation that was relevant to our remit. As well as providing the detail requested above please will you respond to the points outlined below which have been raised by stakeholders in their submissions to the LJC consultation.

Food and drink:

- Food safety – The Food Standards Agency (FSA) state they are responsible for over 150 pieces of REUL on food safety in England and Wales, plus 39 additional pieces in Wales, where it has wider responsibilities. The FSA states “we are clear that we cannot simply sunset the laws on food safety and authenticity without a decline in UK food standards and a significant risk to public health.”
- Divergence – the Food and Drink Federation state “this has the potential to drive through significant divergence if changes are not aligned on a UK basis and this would then put additional burdens on Welsh businesses, particularly smaller enterprises”.

Farming:

- Farming standards - NFU Cymru have said that governments “may find themselves fighting hasty rear-guard actions to close legislative gaps which have opened up. Such scenarios will be damaging for business and consumer confidence and certainty”. They warn high standards must be properly rewarded from the marketplace, otherwise Welsh producers will simply be placed at a competitive disadvantage. They urge the Welsh Government to work with other governments to advocate high standards and resist a race to the bottom.

Animal Welfare:

- The RSPCA say that RUEL contains “some of the most totemic and important changes in animal welfare” and are worried that standards could be at risk. They are also concerned about changes or the removal of reserved laws on Wales, such as bans on the veterinary use of hormones and prohibitions on imports of wild animals and seal products, and the use of animals in research.

I have copied this letter to Huw Irranca-Davies MS in his capacity as Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'D'.

Paul Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

