



Llyr Gruffydd MS  
Chair  
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

1 September 2023

Dear Llyr,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 July regarding the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee's views on my recent Legislative Statement.

The legislative programme is an essential part of our ambitious and radical programme for government, and we will bring forward an unprecedented number of Bills before the end of this Senedd term. The result is that it is necessary to prioritise time critical legislation in the third year of our programme. This includes Bills to reform the Senedd and introduce gender quotas for candidates elected to the Welsh Parliament, as well as a Bill to reform the electoral system which, under a standing convention, should be in place a minimum of 6 months before an election. Although these Bills don't fall within the remit of this Committee, they are an important factor in determining the order of the Bills within the programme that the Government will bring forward.

We will introduce a Bus Bill to reform the delivery of bus services in Wales during the 2024 spring term. I am mindful that the Committee is currently considering two other Government bills and, to avoid overloading the Committee, we will introduce the Bus Bill after the Committee has completed its scrutiny of The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill and the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill has reached Stage 3. The Disused Tips Safety Bill, which will reform laws around coal tip safety and spoil tips more generally, will be brought forward later in the legislative year after the Committee has completed its consideration of the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill. This approach will also allow us to stagger the amending stages of the Bus and Disused Tips Safety Bills and will mean that the Committee is not required to scrutinise more than two Government Bills simultaneously.

A Bill to establish an environmental governance body for Wales and to introduce a statutory duty and targets to protect and restore biodiversity is a priority for this Government and I can assure the Committee that we will bring forward legislation during this Senedd term.

Dr Nerys Llewelyn Jones, the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales, will continue to oversee the functioning of environmental law in Wales until a permanent body is established. Whilst the interim arrangements do not fully replicate what was in place before

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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 left the European Union, the Interim Assessor carries out an important role in reviewing the framework of environmental law. We will also strengthen the interim arrangements by recruiting a deputy to Dr Llewelyn Jones in this interim period. I look forward to engaging with stakeholders and the Senedd as we develop this important legislation.

I am copying this letter to Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**