Dear Rebecca,

My officials have been liaising with Defra officials on the preparation of the Reservoirs Act (Panels of Civil Engineers) (Applications and Fees) Regulations 2021. This is a piece of legislation which is a no procedure Statutory Instrument and therefore is not required to be laid before the respective legislatures. With this in mind, Welsh Government officials approached Defra officials to seek agreement for the Statutory Instrument to be made bilingually. Defra officials agreed to this approach, and Welsh Government officials have subsequently proceeded on that basis.

I understand the Wales Office has since intervened and prevented this approach by stating UK Ministers cannot consider bilingual instruments. My officials have been provided with very limited rationale for this position, which I do not agree with. I am therefore writing to express my disappointment at the position that has been taken and would ask that you reconsider. Defra has statutory duties to provide services bilingually and promote the Welsh language in its Welsh Language Scheme, as agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner. Committing to creating a bilingual instrument would be in keeping with the spirit of those duties under the Scheme. In the event that this position remains unchanged, I would request a response setting out the reasons for the UK Government’s position.

I am copying this letter to the First Minister, Counsel General and the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language. I am also copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Wales and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to express my dissatisfaction with the position taken by the Wales Office.
In addition, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Senedd's Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Griffiths
AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs