

Lesley Griffiths AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs  
Welsh Government

24 October 2018

Dear Lesley,

### **Consideration of the UK Government's Agriculture Bill**

As set out in my letter to you dated 18 October, the Committee is currently undertaking work on the Welsh provisions within the UK's Agriculture Bill. Given the historic significance of this Bill, and the implications of the Welsh provisions for the future of the agricultural sector in Wales, we are keen for you to appear before the Committee to answer Members' questions.

I understand that Welsh Government officials have notified Committee staff informally that you are not able to attend the Committee's meetings on 14, 22 and 28 November, or 6 and 12 December. The Committee has therefore agreed that I should write to extend a formal invitation to you with the expectation that time will be made available in your diary to accommodate our request.

The UK Government's Agriculture Bill is the first of its kind since the Agriculture Act 1947 and provides the legislative framework to bring an end to the Common Agricultural Policy – a policy which has been in place for more than 40 years. The Welsh Government has requested the inclusion in the Bill of provisions that confer significant and extensive powers on the Welsh Ministers. These include powers –

- to phase out and eventually terminate direct payments through regulations;
- to introduce, through regulations, new financial support schemes for farmers and landowners;
- to create new offences and associated monetary penalties, through regulations; and
- to delegate financial assistance functions to another organisation or person.



We hope your appearance before the Committee will provide an opportunity for you to expand on your policy objectives; to explain why you believe the provisions you have requested are appropriate and proportionate; and to address any outstanding issues in relation to the drafting of the provisions.

I understand that you have accepted a request from the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee ('CLA Committee') to attend its 5 November meeting to give evidence on the Agriculture Bill. As the Assembly's lead Committee on rural affairs, you will, of course, understand that this Committee will wish to pursue different aspects of the Bill with you.

Should you be in a position to rearrange your existing diary commitments, our preferred meeting date is either 14 or 22 November. If these prove difficult for you, we are also prepared to make time available on 28 November, and on 6 or 12 December. You will wish to be aware that there is a possibility that the Committee will be meeting in Aberystwyth on 6 December as part of the Senedd@Aberystwyth event.

As you know, the reporting deadline for the LCM is 14 December. If you are unable to rearrange any existing diary commitments, we believe it would be appropriate to seek the Business Committee's agreement to an extension to this deadline to accommodate your attendance.

I should be grateful if you would respond to our invitation by **Friday 26 October** so that we can finalise our approach to consideration of the Bill.

Yours sincerely,



**Mike Hedges AM**

**Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee**

