



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

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15 July 2020

Victoria Prentis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Victoria,

EM 7707/20: PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EU) NO 1305/2013 AS REGARDS SPECIFIC MEASURES TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL TEMPORARY SUPPORT UNDER EAFRD IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) on the above Proposal, which was considered by our Environment Sub-Committee on 15 July 2020.

We took evidence about the impact of COVID-19 on the farming sector in Northern Ireland as part of our inquiry on Agrifood and the Northern Ireland Protocol. The challenges facing industries in Northern Ireland are particularly acute, but COVID-19 is affecting farmers and rural businesses across the UK, and we trust that you will take all steps necessary to support the sector at this challenging time.

In your EM you stated that most of the remaining funding is already targeted. Please clarify exactly how much EAFRD funding from the current budget cycle is uncommitted in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively, and would therefore be available for use under these provisions without repurposing any planned spend.

Please also clarify whether funding available under the EAFRD that is not spent by the end of the budget cycle is lost.

Over the period since the EM was written, has any part of the UK declared an intention to make use of these provisions? If so, what has been proposed by way of eligibility and selection criteria? How much of the funding would be provided to farmers, and how much to SMEs?

We note that, in addition to the payment enabled by this Proposal, domestic measures have been launched or proposed. Please provide further detail on the domestic initiatives that have

now been introduced in each part of the UK specifically to support the farming and food sectors in the context of rural development, including support for both farmers and SMEs.

The Committee continues to take an active interest in this matter and we would therefore welcome being kept updated on developments. We look forward to a response within ten working days.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Kinnoull', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee