



## Department for International Trade

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Angus Brendan MacNeil MP  
International Trade Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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30 June 2020

Dear Angus,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June regarding your Committee's role in the scrutiny of new Free Trade Agreements.

Firstly, I welcomed the opportunity last week to discuss some of the key issues of interest to you. I want to take the opportunity here to emphasise that I am committed to working closely with your committee and continuing a constructive working relationship as we take forward the UK's independent trade policy.

You will be aware that the second round of UK-US FTA talks concluded last week, focusing on the majority of chapters and continued a detailed discussion of legal text. I laid a WMS today in Parliament outlining further details.

In terms of the Command Paper entitled "*Processes for making free trade agreements once the UK has left the EU*", this Government is committed to the key principles of transparency and ensuring effective scrutiny of our trade policy and have restated – and delivered on – many of the commitments in that paper already.

### **Access to information**

The Government has a responsibility to protect UK interests in our international negotiations and ensure it does not release information that would undermine our negotiating positions or our partners' legitimate expectations of confidentiality.

In terms of access to information, the Government has shared comprehensive information with Parliament ahead of negotiations and will continue to provide regular updates as negotiations progress, in line with our commitments to transparency.

As I made clear in my evidence to your committee on 24 June, I am supportive of holding private briefings with you to discuss the progress of negotiations and areas of interest of the committee. I am pleased to confirm that the first of these briefings is already scheduled for 1 July with my department's Chief Negotiator for the UK-US FTA.

## Committee Report

As I set out to your committee on 24 June my department will work with your committee to ensure you are able to publish a report, where it is practical and reasonable to do so, on any new trade agreement before it is laid in Parliament under CRaG. Similarly, if the committee were to recommend a debate on an agreement prior to ratification, the Government would, of course, consider that request subject to parliamentary timetabling.

I look forward to continued positive engagement with the International Trade Committee as we progress our trade agenda.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Truss', is centered on the page.

**THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP**  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
& President of the Board of Trade