



Petitions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 4887 Email petitionscommittee@parliament.uk
Website www.parliament.uk/petitions-committee

Jo Churchill MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

24 May 2022

Dear Minister,

I'm writing to ask for more information on the Government's commitments on animal welfare, following the Queen's Speech earlier this month.

In the debate held in June 2021 on a number of e-petitions relating to animal welfare, the Minister outlined a programme of animal welfare legislation the Government was developing to address the issues raised in those petitions. We are pleased to see the action the Government is taking through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill to address issues of real concern to hundreds of thousands of petitioners, including pet abduction and the importing of dogs that have been subject to ear cropping.

The Minister also indicated in that debate that future legislation would address shark finning, the subject of e-petition [300535](#), which received over 115,000 signatures. It had been reported that measures to achieve this would be included as part of the Animal Welfare (Animals Abroad) Bill, which the Government committed to bringing forward in last year's Queen's Speech. At that time, the Government stated that this Bill would also end UK-based advertising of low welfare animal experiences abroad, which is another issue about which petitioners have expressed concerns (for example, in e-petition [302242](#)). However, this year's Queen's Speech made no reference to this Bill. I would therefore be grateful if you could confirm whether the Government still intends to proceed with these two measures, and—if so—when and how it will take them forward.

Separately, I would also appreciate any update you can provide on the Government's work to explore reforms to improve farmed animal welfare standards—including phasing out the use of cages—in line with your Department's August 2021 response to e-petition [593775](#). In particular, following the publication of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway in February, can you set out in further detail the steps the Government will take to support producers to move away from the use of cages for laying hens and farrowing crates for sows; and when details of any regulatory reforms the Government intends to propose as part of this work will be announced?

I would be grateful to receive your reply by Thursday 16 June.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee