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Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter of 24 July 2020 following up on the Environmental Audit Committee recommendations relating to the review of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (the FFRs).

Bringing forward new legislation and developing a new flammability test

In July 2019 the Government published its [response](#) to the consultation on 'Updating the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988'. This response set out how the Government will now develop a new approach to furniture safety regulation that will address the risks posed by fire and chemicals and enable businesses to bring innovative new products to market. It will focus on delivering safety outcomes such as reduced risk of ignition and reduced risk of fire-spread, and will be underpinned by a set of essential safety requirements that upholstered furniture placed on the market will have to meet.

This approach takes the focus away from passing a prescribed test and places the emphasis on ensuring the safety of the product as a whole. The outcome-based approach would aid innovation, encouraging manufacturers to find new ways of making furniture fire resistant and reduce the reliance on flame retardant chemicals.

The new legislation will be supported by technical standards that we have asked the British Standards Institution to develop in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including industry, fire-safety experts and consumer representatives.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was set up to be the national product safety regulator and to lead the work to ensure that the UK is in a strong position to protect consumers and enable UK businesses to thrive. OPSS has been actively working with organisations that have an interest in the FFRs to gather evidence and test ideas to support the development of our new approach. OPSS is also drawing on independent scientific and technical experts and has commissioned research to help inform the policy development and ensure we have the right evidence base on which to make new regulations.

Scope of the new approach including children's products

The Government has committed that, in developing the new approach, we would review the status of baby and children's products within the scope of the regulations.

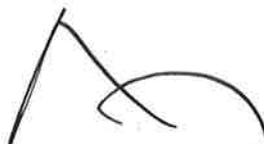
Labelling for chemical flame retardants

The Government also committed to consider the most suitable way to address the issue of labelling for chemical flame retardants in furniture. This includes the role of labelling in providing consumers with information and choice at the point of sale, and how labelling may help with the disposal of articles that contain chemical flame retardants.

In 2019, OPSS commissioned research to examine different styles of labelling and consumer views on their effectiveness. This research will be published shortly and form part of the evidence base on which a decision on appropriate labelling will be made.

I appreciate the Committee is keen to be updated on the timeline for the review and implementation of the new regulations. The Government is committed to consulting on the detail of the new regulations when the appropriate research and evidence gathering is complete.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

THE RT HON ALOK SHARMA MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy