

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

7 December 2022

Rt Hon. Lord Benyon
Minister of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

14151/21: Proposal for a Regulation on the making available on the Union market as well as export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 (42035)

We considered your letter of 9 November 2022 on the above document at our meeting of 7 December 2022.

We are disappointed that you did not respond directly to our queries around the risks of divergent approaches being adopted globally to tackling deforestation through supply chain measures nor did you explain if you had sought consensus with the EU on the design of such measures. In an area such as this where cooperation is essential, we reiterate our view that the UK risks ending up as a rule-taker whereas it has an opportunity to be a rule-maker.

We are aware that negotiations at EU level have just concluded. Once the text is available, you will be in a position to finalise your assessment both concerning the impact on the UK as a whole as well as the implications for Northern Ireland under the terms of the Protocol.

We ask that you submit your assessment to us once the text is available. We anticipate that a response by the end of February 2023 at the latest should be a realistic timeframe now that a draft deal has been concluded.

We are copying this letter to Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee and Martyn Atkins, Clerk of the Committee; Simon Hoare MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Stephen Habberley, Clerk of the Committee; the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Affairs

Committee in the House of Lords and Nick Boorer, Clerk of the Committee; your Departmental EU Scrutiny team; and Les Saunders in the Cabinet Office.

CHAIR