



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee –
International Agreements Sub-Committee

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Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2 Marsham Street
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29 October 2020

Scrutiny of Fisheries Agreements

Dear Secretary of State for Environment,

I write in support of the letter from the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Neil Parish MP, sent to you on 20 October about this issue.

The International Agreements Sub-Committee, which I chair, conducts scrutiny on all agreements laid under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, including those on fisheries. As Mr Parish's letter notes, the Department for International Trade has agreed to enable us to conduct confidential scrutiny of trade deals prior to their formal laying in Parliament. We have recently done this with the UK-Japan deal, and from that experience we can say that the extra time is valuable for handling complex and important agreements when the window allowed by CRAG is so short.

Should you and your Department introduce such an arrangement, we would hope that they could be agreed on a bicameral basis, as has been done with DIT. The Committee secretariat stands ready to discuss with your officials and the EFRA Committee secretariat the practical basis for managing any such arrangements.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and that Committee's Clerk, Ian Bradshaw.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon. the Lord Goldsmith QC
Chair of the House of Lords International Agreements Sub-Committee