



# International Trade Committee

14 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NB

Tel.: 020 7219 1318 E-mail: [tradecom@parliament.uk](mailto:tradecom@parliament.uk)

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for International Trade

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury

25 November 2020

Dear Elizabeth and Rishi,

I am writing to you regarding the International Trade Committee's UK Freeports inquiry and its planned ministerial evidence session, scheduled for Wednesday 2 December.

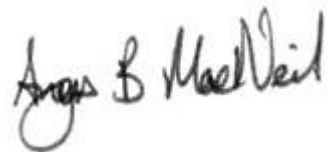
My Committee launched this inquiry in April of this year. Although responsibility for the Freeports policy sits formally with the Treasury, there is obviously a clear relevance of the policy to the work of the Department for International Trade – given the role of Freeports in supporting trade and investment.

As you will be aware, on 20 October the Committee's secretariat issued an invitation on behalf of the Committee requesting that a Minister from both HM Treasury and the Department for International Trade appear at the evidence session on 2 December. My Committee purposely sought to provide early notice of this evidence session, and requested a response by 13 November. On that date, the Treasury declined the invitation. On Monday of this week – ten days late, and just nine days before the evidence session – the invitation was declined by DIT. Both Departments suggested it would be more appropriate for the other to attend the session to assist the Committee.

It is unacceptable that no UK Government Minister is willing to attend my Committee to give evidence on an issue described by the Government as “a flagship government programme,” and which has been the subject of two major policy publications in recent weeks. In any case, my Committee believes it is essential to hear from Ministers from both Departments to understand how the policy will be implemented across government and its objectives achieved.

I request that this invitation be reconsidered by both of your Departments without further delay and confirmation of Ministerial attendance be provided no later than Friday 27 November at 5pm so that the session can proceed as planned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angus B MacNeil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'M'.

Angus Brendan MacNeil  
Chair of the International Trade Committee