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Sir Bill Cash MP
Houses of Parliament
House of Commons
London
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4th September 2023

Dear Sir Bill,

THE RETAINED EU LAW (REVOCATION AND REFORM) ACT 2023 (REVOCATION AND SUNSET DISAPPLICATION) REGULATIONS 2023

I am pleased to confirm the Government has today laid before Parliament the first major revocation Statutory Instrument (SI) under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act. This will revoke 93 pieces of retained EU law that are no longer relevant or necessary for the UK. I know you have expressed a strong interest in the exercise of the powers provided in the REUL Act, and therefore I hope you will welcome this SI, which we intend to be the first of many.

Given that you are Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee, and given your personal interest and expertise in REUL, I have set out in a little detail the background to this SI and its effect. As always, please do give me a call if you would like to discuss this further.

The Government is absolutely committed to taking full advantage of our regulatory freedoms post-Brexit, including through the REUL Act and the accompanying SI Programme.

The SI programme will utilise the powers in the Bill to ensure that inefficient and bureaucratic retained EU law is removed from the UK statute book or reformed in order to best suit the best interests of the UK. This SI continues the work already undertaken in Schedule 1 of the Retained EU Law Act in tidying and bringing further clarity to the statute book.

This wave of revocations focuses on legislation which is redundant, obsolete, and no longer has any legal effect. This remains essential to the work of tidying up the statute book, removing unnecessary retained EU laws, and therefore ensuring our laws are accurate, accessible and clear. We will also be publishing an explainer document on gov.uk - similar to that provided alongside the revoke Schedule in the REUL Act. This will provide a clear rationale and further detail on each revocation.

The SI also contains a small number of preservations where departments have identified Retained EU Law that it is necessary to preserve from the revocation that would be enacted via Schedule 1 of the REUL Act and require further analysis. These relate to biocidal products, Road Vehicles (Testing) and Merchant Shipping and require preservation in order to ensure certain provisions are maintained and supported while further analysis and plans for reform are finalised.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service has also identified three pieces of legislation which must be preserved for Northern Ireland only. All three pieces relate to information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries. Of course, this SI does not represent the extent of our ambitions on REUL. There are over 2,000 revocations and reforms already underway and the Department for Business and Trade will continue to drive forward a cross government programme of revocation and reform to reduce burdens on business and costs to consumers.

The steps the Government has already taken are a down payment on our plans to reform REUL and reduce the regulatory burden. This SI will be followed by further, more ambitious REUL reform such as reforms to reduce disproportionate EU-derived working time reporting requirements that could save businesses around £1 bn a year; and to streamline the 400-page EU-derived rulebook for wine which is overly complex and bureaucratic. Announcements to reduce red tape for business and improve the lives of our citizens will also follow including, on consumer transparency, transport and travel, and how the Government works with regulators to ensure they are playing their part in HMG's regulatory objectives.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you should you have any questions. I look forward to working with you and hope to be able to count on your support as this piece of legislation progresses through Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

MICHAEL TOMLINSON KC MP
SOLICITOR GENERAL