



Department for Business & Trade

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE
Minister for Investment and Minister for
Regulatory Reform
Department for Business and Trade
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY

The Rt Hon Lord Peter Goldsmith KC
Chair, International Agreements Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

T +44 (0) 20 4551 0011
E Johnson.correspondence@businessandtrade.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk/dbt

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Dear Peter,

Thank you for the continued engagement and interest of the International Agreements Committee in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). I am writing to address some of the comments raised during the Committee briefing on 19 December regarding CPTPP.

During the briefing, Lord Fox asked which manufacturing sectors will benefit from CPTPP rules of origin. Using CPTPP rules of origin, British businesses could take advantage of new export opportunities and trade more freely across the bloc. CPTPP rules of origin could also help support UK efforts to diversify critical supply chains by deepening our trading links across the Asia-Pacific region. It is not possible to model the full range of real-world potential benefits of the rules of origin provisions in CPTPP on different industries/manufacturing sectors, as it depends on individual firms' future supply chains and investment decisions across the trading area.

CPTPP will also be additional to opportunities under a number of existing bilateral agreements with individual CPTPP member states. The additional access granted by CPTPP could potentially help UK exporters better integrate into supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region.

On a separate matter, Lord Grimstone asked if we had sufficient resource within the Department for Business and Trade to play a full role in CPTPP. As I confirmed in the meeting, there is a dedicated team of around 12 or 13 in the Department, including seasoned negotiators, who are currently working on this full-time, supported by a wide range of colleagues, such as lawyers and subject matter experts. The Department plans to maintain this team to support our membership of CPTPP for the foreseeable future, although of course the number of employees may vary according to need, as in addition to implementation of the agreement there will be an ongoing need to coordinate activities around CPTPP committees and accessions, amongst other business.

The Department also has dedicated teams whose work involves ensuring that the UK can accrue the benefits of being in CPTPP, such as our Free Trade Agreement Utilisation team. As Lord Grimstone said, it is crucial that we maintain our strong position and influence within the CPTPP group. I welcome his and the other Committee members' concern on this issue, and hope this is reassuring.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Johnson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE

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