



Baroness Merron
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

4 March 2026

Dear Minister,

TOBACCO AND VAPES BILL

Thank you for your letter, dated 11 February 2026, regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. The House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee considered this letter at its meeting on 4 March 2026.

We note your statement that “the Bill will apply in Northern Ireland and is compatible with both domestic and international obligations. This includes obligations under the Windsor Framework Agreement.” Given the concerns raised in the House of Commons, we would be grateful for further detail on the basis for the Government’s position.

We further note that “a notification has been submitted in August 2025 on the EU’s Technical Regulations Information System (TRIS), as the Bill contains certain measures affecting products on the Northern Ireland market covered by EU Directive 2015/1535” and that as part of this process, “several EU Member States had submitted detailed opinions, extending the notification standstill period until 18 February 2026.” What is the substance of the detailed opinions submitted by the EU Member States?

Finally, we note that the Government “intends to respond on these detailed opinions by 18 February and remains confident that the Bill will complete its passage within this parliamentary session.” We are grateful to your officials for sharing the Government’s response to the TRIS notification with us. What are the next steps for the Bill now that the Government has responded to the notification? What are the consequences if the EU does not agree with the Government’s assessment of the compatibility of the Bill with its international obligations, including the Windsor Framework? Is the Government concerned about the risk of potential litigation in relation to this Bill?

We would be grateful for a response within our usual timeframe of 10 working days.

I am copying this letter to Tonia Antoniazzi MP, Chair of the Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Phillip McGuigan MLA, Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health.



HOUSE OF LORDS

Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee

House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 5864

hlniscrutiny@parliament.uk

www.parliament.uk/lords

Yours sincerely,

Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC,

Chair, Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee