



# International Trade Committee

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Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
Department for International Trade  
Old Admiralty Building  
Admiralty Place  
London  
SW1A 2BL

1 July 2021

Dear Liz,

Thank you for your letter this afternoon regarding your introduction of regulations to extend safeguards on certain steel products – despite the recommendation of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) that the safeguards concerned should not be continued – following your [written ministerial statement](#) to that effect yesterday.

I'd be grateful if you could clarify what this decision means in terms of the autonomy of the TRA and the weight its recommendations will be given by Government, in the short and long term.

I note your reference to the Government carrying out a review of the Trade Remedies framework “as an urgent priority to ensure it is up-to-date, champions WTO rules and is fit for purpose in the post-COVID world”.

When you appeared before my Committee on 19 May, you referred to the fact that under the current trade remedies regime the Secretary of State only has a “downward ratchet”, so that “in the case of the current steel safeguards review, the only choice I have under the law is whether to accept the TRA’s recommendation or to see all safeguard measures expire on 30 June”. You said that you were “reviewing these powers to explore strengthening them” ([Q23](#); see also [Q26](#)).

Since the review of Secretary of State’s powers to which you referred was not mentioned in the [Government’s response](#) to my Committee’s [report on UK trade remedies policy](#), on 26 May I [wrote](#) to Ranil Jayawardena MP, Minister for International Trade, about this. I asked for: “more information on the scope, timeline, and effects of this review”; “clarification as to the range of powers currently being reviewed by the Department and when it expects to conclude its review”; and confirmation as to “whether the considered changes to the Secretary of State’s powers will require modifications to legislation that is currently in force”. I have not received a reply to this letter, so would appreciate it if you could provide, or help expedite, a response to those issues, and also clarify whether that review will now be subsumed into the Trade Remedies framework review.

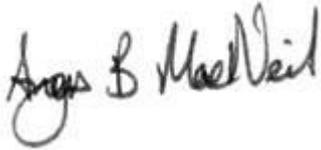
I would also appreciate clarification, within the next week, of: the exact scope and terms of reference for the Government’s review of the Trade Remedies framework;

the timeline for the review; whether it concerns matters that potentially require new primary legislation; and how the conclusions and outcomes will be made public.

I am copying this letter to Minister Jayawardena, for information, and to the TRA Chair, Simon Walker, in case he wishes to respond to any of the issues raised as well.

In accordance with our usual practice, this letter, along with any replies, will be published on the Committee's webpage.

Kind regards,

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