



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Sharon Hodgson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Richard Harrington MP

Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

Our ref: MCB2019/02555

22nd February 2019

Dear Sharon

Thank you for your letter dated 6 February to the Prime Minister, about Nissan and their decision to build the new X-Trail model in Japan. Your letter has been passed to my Department and I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I agree that this is disappointing news and it will be of considerable concern to those people who work at the Nissan plant or indirectly through its supply chain. This announcement is ultimately a commercial decision; however, I am pleased that Nissan have reiterated their commitment to the UK, and in particular Sunderland, as the Qashqai and the Juke will in the future have petrol and plug-in hybrid variants made there, safeguarding existing jobs.

The Government has a long-standing relationship and regular dialogue with all major UK car manufacturers with BEIS Ministers and officials also meeting regularly with the automotive industry through the Automotive Council. We also work closely with industry, including Nissan, to ensure a business environment exists which will enable the UK to remain one of the most competitive countries for automotive manufacturing across Europe. The opportunities for the UK in areas such as battery technology, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence are substantial. We will support the sector to make the most of these opportunities and provide great jobs and careers in the years ahead.

We continue to be engaged with Nissan on the details and impacts of their decision, both in the UK and Europe and with Nissan executives in Japan. I can assure you that if Nissan were to make a new approach for support that the application would be reviewed, as all such requests are, in an impartial and professional way, including review by the independent Industrial Development Advisory Board.

We can only achieve this support across all our sectors by agreeing the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration, which will allow us to move on to the next stage of negotiations. Leaving the European Union (EU) with a deal that supports the future of British industry remains the government's top priority. We are working to secure a Brexit deal that respects the referendum result, protects jobs and the Union, and gives citizens and businesses certainty. The Government will continue to do the responsible thing and prepare for all eventualities in case a final agreement cannot be reached.

The motion on 29 January remains the only one Parliament has passed expressing what it does want, a deal with changes to the backstop. We are taking this mandate forward to seek legally binding changes to the Withdrawal Agreement that deal with concerns on the backstop, while guaranteeing no return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Negotiating such a change will not be easy, but Parliament has made it clear what it needs to approve this Withdrawal Agreement. Doing this means we can leave the EU with a deal that honours the result of the referendum, while protecting our economy, security and our precious Union.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Best Wishes

Richard

RICHARD HARRINGTON MP

Minister for Business and Industry

Happy to have a coffee Sharon
to discuss!
R.