



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

11 JAN 2019

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Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
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Jo Swinson MP
House of Commons
London
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Your ref: JS4985
Our ref: MC2018/26633

31 December 2018

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your email of 11 December to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents about the Environment Bill. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

Environmental matters are ^{largely} a devolved issue and as such should also be raised with the First Minister. We are, however, exploring with the devolved administrations whether they wish to take a similar approach to the one I set out below. We would welcome the opportunity to co-design proposals with the devolved administrations to ensure they work across the whole UK, taking account of the different government and legal systems in the individual nations.

The Government has made clear on a number of occasions that we will not weaken environmental protection when we leave the EU, but will instead be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than that in which we inherited it. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP) sets out how, over a generation, we will replenish depleted soils, rid seas and rivers of the rubbish affecting our planet, cut greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse our air of toxic pollutants, and develop cleaner, more sustainable energy sources.

The Environment Bill builds on the vision set out in the 25 YEP to ensure the environment can be cleaner and greener for future generations. The Environment Bill will establish a new, independent statutory environment body to hold Government to account on environmental standards once we leave the EU and a statutory statement of environmental principles to guide future Government policy making. Draft legislation on environmental principles and governance is due to be published before Christmas, and we are currently developing the wider content of the Bill, including exploring possible wider legislative measures to deliver commitments in the 25 YEP.

The amended EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 confirms that the Environmental Principles, such as the polluter pays principle and the precautionary principle, which currently guide EU policy making and development, will be set out in UK legislation. This means the environmental principles included in the EU treaties will be present on the UK statute book after the UK leaves the EU.

Yours sincerely,

Thérèse

DR THERESE COFFEY MP

