

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2021

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about the Northern Ireland Protocol.

As you will know, the Protocol was designed to reflect the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, recognising Northern Ireland's integral place as part of the United Kingdom, while setting out mechanisms to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland.

It has become increasingly clear, however, that while the Protocol has worked well to preserve North-South cooperation, it has had a detrimental impact on Northern Ireland's relationship with the rest of the UK. People in Northern Ireland have suffered disruption to supplies, businesses have faced increased costs and community tensions have increased.

I do not believe that this is a sustainable situation and the Prime Minister has said that the current circumstances would justify taking the unilateral safeguarding action provided by Article 16 of the Protocol. This would be a serious undertaking and the Prime Minister has said that we should first seek to work with the EU to deliver changes to the Protocol that fully respect Northern Ireland's place in the our internal market and customs territory while ensuring no border on the island of Ireland.

I hope that the EU will work with us to find a settlement that can endure. The Protocol cannot continue to operate in a way that damages the political, social and commercial fabric of life in Northern Ireland. Our priority must always be to uphold the hard-won gains of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours sincerely
Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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