

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2023

Dear Constituents

Thank you for your email about the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill.

In January 2022, the Government announced plans to bring forward a Bill to create a more innovative regulatory regime that would not have been possible were the UK still a member of the European Union. The Bill will abolish this special status and will enable the Government, via Parliament to amend more easily, and repeal and replace retained EU Law. The Bill will also include a sunset date by which all remaining retained EU Law will either be repealed or assimilated into UK domestic law.

Your email referred to a range of areas and I would like to address them in turn.

Workers rights:

The Government will not abandon our strong record on workers' rights; we have amongst the highest standards in the world and that will not change. In many areas, our workers' rights are much stronger than those of the EU:

- On 1 April 2023, the National Living Wage will increase by 9.7% to £10.42.
- UK workers are entitled to 5.6 weeks of annual leave compared to the EU entitlement of 4 weeks.
- We provide a year of maternity leave with the option to convert to shared parental leave to enable parents to share care. The EU minimum maternity leave is just 14 weeks.
- The right to request flexible working for all employees was introduced in the UK in the early 2000s; the EU has only recently agreed rules and will offer the right to parents and carers only.

Product safety:

Our current product safety framework is largely a mix of retained EU law but also includes domestic law and industry standards. As a result, it can be complex and difficult to understand. The government is committed to protecting consumers from unsafe products being placed on the market now and in the future. We are currently finalising a consultation, setting out the next steps in delivering on the government's ambitions for a new product safety framework. Our proposals include changes to save time and money for business, for example, through the introduction of voluntary e-labelling for devices with screens.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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Animal welfare:

We have amongst the highest standards of animal welfare anywhere in the world. Since 2010 alone, Conservative governments have introduced new regulations for minimum standards for meat chickens; banned the use of conventional battery cages for laying hens; made CCTV mandatory in slaughterhouses in England; made microchipping mandatory for dogs in 2015; modernised our licensing system for a range of activities such as dog breeding and pet sales; protected service animals via ‘Finn’s Law’; banned the commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens (‘Lucy’s Law’); passed the Wild Animals in Circuses Act; led work to implement humane trapping standards; and passed the Animal Sentience Act. We have a manifesto commitment to ban the exports of live animals for slaughter and fattening.

Environment:

Our world-leading Environment Act 2021 has dramatically strengthened environmental regulations. The EU model has not stopped the decline in our natural world; we can and we must do better through our own domestic policy. The Government has consulted on legally binding targets on air, water, biodiversity, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Those targets will be put into law this month. Furthermore, we have a legally-binding commitment to halt the decline in nature by 2030 and we were amongst the first countries in the world to commit to Net Zero by 2050.

Flight compensation:

The powers provided by the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, are wide enough to allow us to maintain comprehensive provision in this area, for example through preserving or restating the provisions of this legislation. The Department for Transport published the “Aviation Consumer Policy reform” consultation in January 2022. This included proposals in relation to enforcement of aviation consumer protections, redress for breaches of consumer rights and reforms to compensation for delays and for damaged wheelchairs or other mobility equipment, allowing us to consider what works best for the UK domestically for consumers and industry. I know that the Government are considering responses and will respond to this consultation shortly.

Some retained EU law is legally inoperable and removing it from the statute book easily is good democratic governance. Requiring the Government to undergo complex and unnecessary parliamentary processes to remove retained EU law that is no longer necessary or operable, and can much more easily be removed, is not good governance.

I believe it is right that the public should know how much legislation derived from the EU there is and the progress the Government is making to reform it. For this reason, we have published a public dashboard containing a comprehensive list of all retained EU law. This will also document the Government’s progress on reforming retained EU law and will be updated regularly to reflect plans and actions taken.



I do not believe it would be right to leave these EU legacy laws - many of which are either defunct or not fit for purpose - on our statute book forever. Seven years after people voted to leave the EU it is reasonable that we complete the process of removing EU legislation from the UK statute book, and for ministers and parliament to ensure that all of our laws work for the British people.

This Bill contains robust scrutiny mechanisms that will enable the appropriate scrutiny of any amendments or repeals of retained EU law. This includes a sifting procedure that will apply to regulations proposed to be made under the power to restate and the powers to revoke or replace retained EU law. I do, however, want to assure you that I am committed to ensuring that this bill receives the appropriate scrutiny it is due.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again. If you would like to keep up to date with my activities as your Member of Parliament then please subscribe to my Darlington Matters newsletter using this link: www.petergibson.org/signup

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

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