

24<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Environment Bill.

Once the Bill has completed the Committee Stage, the Government will reflect on concerns about the Bill raised by colleagues and interested parties. I look forward to the Bill coming back to the House, at which point I will have the opportunity to vote on any amendments brought forward there.

As set out in the 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, the decision to leave the European Union has created an historic opportunity to deliver a Green Brexit, where environmental standards are not only maintained but enhanced.

I am pleased that the Bill will ensure the environment is at the heart of all policy making and that this and future governments are held to account if they fail to uphold their environmental duties. These will include meeting net-zero by 2050, as well as wider long-term legally binding targets on biodiversity, air quality, water, and resource and waste efficiency which will be established under the Bill.

The Office for Environmental Protection, a new, world-leading independent regulator, will be established in statute to scrutinise environmental policy and law, investigate complaints and take enforcement action when necessary. This will ensure we succeed in leaving the environment in a better condition than we found it. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan will also be placed on a statutory footing, and a set of environmental principles will be introduced that will be used to guide future government policy making.

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government committed to developing a Nature Recovery Network and, in the long term, to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site series. A new framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be legislated for in the Environment Bill, to help support the Nature Recovery Network and better direct investment in the environment and green infrastructure – creating places that are richer in wildlife and provide wider benefits for local communities. The Bill will also require the preparation and publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, mapping nature-rich habitats, so that investment can be targeted where it will make the most difference. These local plans will embrace local knowledge to strengthen links between neighbouring communities and support the wider Network.

Outside the EU, our country can develop global gold standard environmental policies. Having left the Common Agricultural Policy we can use public money for public goods, rewarding environmentally responsible land use. By leaving the Common Fisheries Policy we will be able to grant access and allocate quotas based on sustainability, allowing us to pursue the highest standards in marine conservation.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

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Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**