



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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To All MPs

10th November 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Environment Bill – Tackling deforestation

I am writing to inform you about amendments which the government is tabling to the Environment Bill to tackle deforestation.

Government Amendments

We are proposing world-leading legislation to protect rainforests. Deforestation is now the second leading cause of climate change globally and is responsible for around 11% of all greenhouse gas emissions – so it is vitally important that we tackle this issue.

Almost 50% of recent global tropical deforestation was caused by illegal deforestation for commercial agriculture and timber plantations – but this is much higher in some regions, with over 90% of deforestation being illegal in some of the world's most important forests. The law we are proposing would make it illegal for larger businesses to use key commodities – such as cocoa, rubber, soya and palm oil – if they are not produced in line with local laws protecting forests and other natural ecosystems. UK businesses (of a particular threshold) would be required to be transparent about how they have ensured their supply chains do not contain 'forest risk' commodities from illegal deforestation.

We consulted on this approach from 25 August to 5 October and received 64,000 responses, from retailers, suppliers, environmental NGOs, overseas partners and members of the public: 99% were in favour of legislating on this critical issue. Our full consultation response has been published on gov.uk today.¹

Response to the Global Resource Initiative

We have also published, today, our response to the broader recommendations of the Global Resource Initiative - an independent taskforce commissioned in 2019 to advise the UK on

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/forests-reducing-deforestation-in-uk-supply-chains>

how to reduce the climate and environmental impacts of its supply chains. This response sets out a wider package of measures that we are putting in place to tackle deforestation.

Wider action

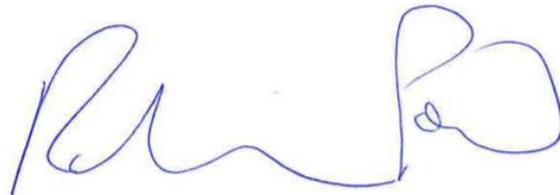
Our intent is not just to take world-leading domestic measures, but to also forge a global alliance of countries committed to working together to ensure that our precious forests are protected for future generations.

Our forthcoming co-Presidency, alongside Italy, of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in the UK next year, will provide a vital opportunity to push climate and environmental issues to front and centre of the multilateral trade agenda.

As part of our Presidency, we will be running a campaign on this issue, building an alliance of producer and consumer country governments to agree a set of guiding principles to improve sustainability across supply chains. Additionally, in September 2019, the Prime Minister announced a doubling of the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) to £11.6 billion which will help support the transition to low-carbon agriculture across producer countries.

I hope that you will support the government on our amendments and this agenda as we approach COP26. If you would like to discuss these amendments further, please get in touch by emailing ps.rebecca.pow@defra.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Pow', written in a cursive style.

REBECCA POW MP