

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

1st December 2020

LONDON SW1A 0AA

New Content,

RE: PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY OF FUTURE TRADE AGREEMENTS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding parliamentary scrutiny of future free trade agreements; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I welcome the Secretary of State for International Trade's recent announcement regarding the shape of arrangements for the scrutiny of future international trade agreements.

Beginning with the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the House of Commons' International Trade Committee and the House of Lords' International Agreements Sub-Committee will receive advanced copies of new trade agreements and I have been assured that these committees will have at least ten sitting days to examine the texts of these proposed trade deals.

As it stands, *The Constitutional Reform & Governance Act 2010* provides the legislative framework by which international agreements are scrutinised by Parliament. Under the Act, the Government must lay any agreement before Parliament for twenty-one sitting days and provide an explanation of the treaty's provisions and the reasons for seeking ratification. If Parliament is not willing to support a particular agreement, it can resolve against ratification and indefinitely delay any primary or secondary legislation which would implement an agreement.

Moreover, I am glad that the Government is putting the Trade & Agriculture Commission on a statutory footing and confirming that the body will produce a report, to be laid in Parliament at the start of each twenty-one day scrutiny period, on the impact on animal welfare and agriculture arising from each new trade deal. This will enhance scrutiny and provide Members of Parliament with greater detailed information relating to each agreement, for them to consider.

As the UK continues to re-develop its trade policy capacity following our exit from the European Union, I am very pleased to see increased engagement between the Government, Parliament and other interested parties, to develop and strengthen the means of scrutinising future trade agreements. It is for these reasons that signing such a pledge is unnecessary, as there is already an established scrutiny process in place, which is being further enhanced.

Once again, thank you for having taken 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.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE