

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

17th August 2022

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jean Contreant

RE: NORTHERN IRELAND PROTOCOL

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Northern Ireland Protocol. I have read your comments on this important issue with interest.

The Government will always work in the best interests of Northern Ireland, making the changes necessary to fix parts of the Northern Ireland Protocol, to restore stability and ensure the delicate balance of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement is protected.

To this end, the Government has introduced the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill which will address the practical problems the protocol has created in Northern Ireland in four key areas: burdensome customs processes; inflexible regulation; tax and spend discrepancies; and democratic governance issues. These problems include disruption and diversion of trade and significant costs and bureaucracy for businesses. They are undermining all three strands of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and have led to the collapse of the power-sharing arrangements at Stormont. The UK Government is committed to seeing these institutions back up and running, so that they can deliver for the people of Northern Ireland.

This Bill is a reasonable and practical solution to these problems, which is designed to protect all three strands of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, including North-South cooperation, and support stability and power-sharing in Northern Ireland. It will end the untenable situation where people in Northern Ireland are treated differently to the rest of the United Kingdom, and protect the supremacy of our courts and our territorial integrity. It will also safeguard the EU Single Market and protect the free flow of North-South trade, ensuring there continues to be no hard border on the island of Ireland.

The UK has engaged in eighteen months of negotiations with the EU on these issues and the Government's preference remains a negotiated solution to fix these problems - and we still seek that common sense outcome. However, the EU continues to insist that they will not change their position, even though their proposals do not solve the problems and in many cases would actually make them worse. Ministers believe that the serious situation in Northern Ireland means they cannot afford to delay. It is the duty of the Government of the United Kingdom to take the necessary steps to preserve stability and prosperity in Northern Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill will support that objective. You can read further information regarding this here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-ireland-protocol-bill-uk-government-legal-position/northern-ireland-protocol-bill-uk-government-legal-position>

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