



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26th November 2022

Jean Contreant,

RE: COMMITMENTS TO NATURE: ELMS AND INVESTMENT ZONES

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Government's commitments to protecting nature and the environment; I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

I would like to assure you that claims that the Government is rowing back on commitments to our farming reforms or nature are wholly untrue.

Now that we are outside of the European Union, the UK is free from the Common Agricultural Policy, which did little to deliver for farmers, farming, or the environment. The Government was elected on a manifesto which pledged to maintain the budget for farming, but spend it in a way that does better for farming and nature.

My ministerial colleagues and I want to support the choices that individual farmers make for their farms, boost food production and agricultural productivity. This will bolster the rural economy and support communities across the country. Ministers are rolling out new schemes which will support farmers to both produce high-quality food and enhance the natural environment. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is committed to these schemes and is looking at how best to deliver them. I look forward to reading more about these schemes later this year.

Further, the *Environment Act 2021* includes a commitment to halt the decline of nature by 2030. This Government will never undermine its commitments to the environment. Any reforms will rightly contribute to growing our economy in equal step with successfully meeting our commitments in the '25 Year Environment Plan' and the legally binding environmental targets through this Act.

Internationally, the UK has committed to protect 30 percent of its land and ocean by 2030, through the 'Leaders Pledge for Nature', which committed to putting nature and biodiversity globally on a road to recovery by 2030.

Regarding the *Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill*, the Government announced plans earlier this year to create a more innovative regulatory regime. I am assured that this Bill will not weaken environmental protections and the Government has acted to increase protections, such as through the *Environment Act 2021*, which sets in law a series of environmental targets, enforced by a new Office for Environmental Protection.



Finally, the Government has announced that it will refocus the Investment Zones programme to centre on universities in left-behind areas. This will leverage local research strengths and build clusters for new growth industries. Clusters will drive growth, while maintaining high environmental standards. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will work closely with mayors, devolved administrations, local authorities, businesses and other local partners, to consider how best to identify and support these clusters. The Chancellor has said that the first decisions are expected ahead of the Spring Budget of 2023.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**