



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

*Jean Gauthier*

**RE: KEPT ANIMALS BILL (DOGS)**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about dogs in the *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill*. I have read your comments with interest.

This Bill includes measures to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, such as increasing the minimum age that dogs can be moved for non-commercial purposes, or commercially imported, into Great Britain, as well as prohibiting the importation of heavily pregnant dams, and dogs, which have been subjected to low welfare practices, such as ear cropping or tail docking.

I understand that the *Kept Animals Bill* proposes to reduce the number of pet dogs, cats and ferrets, that can travel to Great Britain in one non-commercial movement to five pets per vehicle. This was informed by research and engagement with various people, including authorised pet checkers, carriers, animal welfare organisations and veterinary bodies.

Further, under existing legislation, the Animal Plant and Health Agency is able to undertake checks on pets, including documentary, identification and physical checks. All non-commercial dogs, cats and ferrets entering Great Britain on approved routes under the 'Pet Travel Rules' undergo full documentary and identity checks by authorised pet checkers. I am assured that these pet checkers are trained by the Animal and Plant Health Agency prior to being granted approval and receive annual audits of their checking and processing to ensure they uphold requirements.

Let me be clear: the practice of non-exempted mutilations such as cropping dogs' ears is abhorrent, and has rightly been banned in the UK for 15 years. Under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, it is already an offence in England and Wales to carry out a non-exempted mutilation (such as where it is not carried out for medical purposes), including the cropping of a dog's ears. Under the *Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021*, anyone convicted of such an offence faces being sent to prison for up to five years, or receiving an unlimited fine, or both.

The *Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill* introduces measures relating to the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce further restrictions on pet travel and on the commercial importation of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation. These powers will allow the Government to prioritise the welfare of dogs by prohibiting the importation and non-commercial movement of dogs into Great Britain, that have been subject to low welfare practices, such as ear cropping or tail docking, in line with the UK's domestic legislation on these practices.

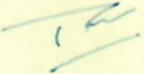




In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. I look forward to reading the summary of responses in due course.

The *Kept Animals Bill* was carried over into the current parliamentary session and will return to the House as soon as parliamentary time allows.

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**