



Craig Whittaker MP

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Brexit and Environmental Law and Governance (the Krebs Amendment)

Thank you for contacting me about Lords Krebs's amendment to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill.

I have always been clear on the need to ensure that our environment is protected after we leave the EU. Our natural environment is precious and fragile and I believe that we must do everything we can to ensure that it is properly managed.

The EU (Withdrawal) Bill will convert all EU environmental law into UK law when we leave the Union next year. The manifesto on which I and all Conservative MPs were elected last year also promised that we should be the *'first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it in.'*

A consultation has already been launched on environmental principles and governance which contains proposals that represent, in my view, a positive vision for the future. The consultation proposes a new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill to ensure that environmental principles, such as the 'polluter pays' and the 'precautionary principle' are embedded in UK law.

The consultation is open until the 2 August 2018 and you may wish to respond to it at the following address: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/eu/environmental-principles-and-governance/>

The Bill would also create a world-leading, independent environmental watchdog to hold the Government to account and would have the following objectives:

- act as a strong, objective, impartial and well-informed voice for environmental protection and enhancement;
- be independent of government and capable of holding it to account;
- be established on a durable, statutory basis;
- have a clear remit, avoiding overlap with other bodies;
- have the powers, functions and resources required to deliver that remit and;
- operate in a clear, proportionate and transparent way in the public interest, recognising that it is necessary to balance environmental protection against other priorities.

I do not believe that Lord Krebs's amendment would be sufficient to achieve its laudable aims and I will not support it for that reason. The Secretary State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has signalled, however, that the Government may be receptive to accepting an amendment that addresses some of the concerns expressed by the House of Lords in a more constructive way. I would be minded to support such an amendment.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Whittaker MP