[MP name here]

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

X DATE 2023

Dear [MP name],

I am writing as a constituent to raise my concerns about the Government’s Retained EU Law (REUL) Bill, which puts at risk thousands of laws that are crucial to protecting our most vulnerable places and species, stopping the pollution of our rivers and streams, and restoring the natural environment of [local area]. I hope you can work with Ministers to seriously rethink the Government’s approach to this Bill.

The REUL Bill leaves a question mark hanging over vital regulations which protect our natural world. The Government’s dashboard lists over 3,700 pieces of Retained EU Law which are currently set to fall away at the end of the year due to the Bill’s ‘sunset clause’. If the REUL Bill becomes law, it will be up to Ministers – with no Parliamentary oversight – whether these protections remain.

Several groups including The Wildlife Trusts and Green Alliance are concerned about this too and have produced MP briefings which give more details. But I am particularly concerned about the following:

* **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the Habitats Regulations:** which protect the “crown jewels” of the UK’s nature, providing a home for some of the world’s most vulnerable animals and plants. In our local area these regulations are the strongest of our environmental protections. If they fall away due to the REUL Bill’s sunset clause, that level of protection would be lost, opening up our most important wildlife sites to unsustainable and damaging development, pollution and a slow death from habitat degradation. It would also mean putting 50 native species specifically protected under this law at risk – including the common otter, dormice, fen orchids and shore dock.
* **Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017:** these ensure that water bodies in the UK are clean and healthy, for both wildlife and humans, by preventing chemical and sewage pollution. Given the recent outcry over the state of our rivers, removing the overarching rules which aim to reverse the UK’s long legacy of industrial pollution would be madness. Losing these protections alongside the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations and Bathing Waters Regulations, would be a disaster for the health of rivers, wetlands, streams and lakes, and silo individual improvement measures.
* **The Plant Protection Products Regulations and Sustainable Use Directive Regulation (EC):** weakening Plant Protection Products Regulations would lead to less stringent tests for pesticides before they are authorised for use in the UK, opening the door to more dangerous products in our fields, and ultimately our food. Altering these regulations could also undermine decisions previously made under them. Decisions such as the 2018 banning of non-emergency use of neonicotinoids (due to their impacts on pollinator populations) were made under the EU regulations, changes leave the legal status of decisions made under them open to question. Banned pesticides could become legal again, with adverse outcomes for public health and biodiversity.
* **The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010:** these oblige the UK Government to take steps towards achieving Good Environmental Status in our marine environment, and to monitor and report on how urgently needed progress will be achieved. You may have seen how incredible the UK’s marine environment is from the BBC’s ‘*Wild Isles’* series. Weakening these regulations would limit the policy drive to recover ocean health. Alongside this, the removal of The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 would put vulnerable marine species such as bottlenose dolphins at a greater risk of harm and disturbance. There are less than 300 dolphins in inshore waters, but they are very loyal to their ‘patch’. Spectacular dolphin sightings could become a rarer occurrence in UK waters – even lost forever.

I hear the UK Government “does not intend” to weaken environmental protections but the Government’s approach has been cloaked in secrecy, with no clarity about whether essential regulations will be revoked or replaced by the end of the year, and if so by what? I also see no guarantee that the Bill’s sweeping powers to water-down or revoke laws will not be used adversely by future Ministers or governments.

What’s more, due to the ‘sunset clause’, there is a real risk important laws are lost by default. These laws are meant to protect every element of our natural environment and many aspects of people’s health – this would be disastrous.

Defra alone has over 1,700 pieces of retained EU law – which I’ve no doubt is taking time and resources at the expense of other important environmental action. I have listed further regulations below. Please speak up on my behalf to find clarity and urge the Government to adopt a different approach through a consultative process that examines, updates, and improves environmental laws.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

* REACH Regulation and the REACH Enforcement Regulations 2008
* Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
* Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
* Urban Waste Water Treatment (England and Wales) Regulations 1994,
* Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010,
* Bathing Waters Regulations 2013,
* Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017,
* Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018 (the Farming Rules for Water)
* Marine Strategy Regulations 2010,
* Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007,
* Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017,
* Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017,
* Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004,
* Plant Protection Products Regulation (EC) 1107/2009,
* Sustainable Use Directive Regulation (EC) 396/2005
* National Emission Ceilings Regulations 2018
* Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019
* Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations 2012
* Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000
* Regulation 139/2013 laying down animal health conditions for imports of certain birds into the Union and the quarantine conditions thereof
* Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006