

Elin Jones MS  
Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee

14 May 2020

Annwyl Lywydd

Scrutiny of the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the UK Environment Bill

We hope that you are well.

Both the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee are in the process of considering the Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the UK Environment Bill. Given the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency, both our committees have taken an opportunity to write to the Minister with questions, in place of holding an evidence-gathering session in a formal committee meeting.

On 11 May both committees were due to receive responses from the Minister to our letters. However, the clerks to the committees have been advised that, owing to the ongoing Welsh Government work on the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be a delay in the Minister responding.

In revising the original reporting deadline to 4 June 2020 (an extension from 1 May 2020), we understand that the Business Committee took into account the delay to the Bills' progress through the UK Parliament.

Sittings of the relevant House of Commons Public Bill Committee were initially suspended as a result of the Covid-19 emergency. As a result, the timetable within which the Committee can complete its work on the Bill has been extended to 25 June 2020. You will



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be aware that, following the completion of the Committee stage, the Bill will progress through two further stages in the Commons, before beginning its passage through the House of Lords.

Given the further delays to the Parliamentary timetable, and the delay in our committees receiving evidence from the Minister, we would be grateful if the Business Committee would agree to further extending the reporting deadline to at least 25 June 2020.

More generally, when it is considering reporting deadlines for LCMs, the Business Committee should be mindful of the constraints of the committee timetable. Several subject committees are now meeting on a fortnightly, rather than weekly, cycle. The normal timetable of six weeks for consideration of an LCM will potentially mean that, in practice, such committees will have only one meeting in which to take oral evidence and agree their reports. Although it is possible for committees to consider and agree reports outside formal meetings, this is not desirable or conducive to good scrutiny. The Business Committee should consider the appropriateness of its normal six week timetable in light of this.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Hedges MS

Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee



Mick Antoniw MS

Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.  
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

