



Department  
for Environment,  
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Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith KCB CBE MP  
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Your ref: JU81233  
Our ref: MC2024/22086/MK

9 January 2025

Dear Sir Julian,

Thank you for your email of 19 November 2024 to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent about the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill and the potential impact on the genetic diversity of dog breeds. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the considerable delay in doing so.

As outlined in our manifesto, this Government is committed to ending puppy smuggling. The Government recently announced its support for the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill, a Private Members' Bill sponsored by Dr Danny Chambers MP. The Bill will close loopholes in the non-commercial pet travel rules that are abused by unscrupulous traders and give the Government powers to prevent the supply of low-welfare pets to the UK. We will use these powers to prohibit the bringing into GB of puppies and kittens under six months old, as well as prohibiting the bringing into GB of heavily pregnant dogs and cats, and dogs and cats that have been mutilated.

I hope it will be of reassurance to know that these prohibitions and any appropriate exemptions will be delivered via secondary legislation at a later date. This will enable us to engage with stakeholders, as the regulations are developed, and consider whether there is sufficient evidence to support targeted exemptions. Any such exemptions will need to be finely balanced against the risk of creating loopholes that could be exploited.

Yours sincerely,

**BARONESS HAYMAN OF ULLOCK**

**MINISTER FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND BIOSECURITY**