

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

8th November 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Animals as Sentient Beings

Thank you for contacting me about animal sentience.

I would like to reassure you that I am committed to making sure that any necessary changes to UK law are made in a rigorous and comprehensive way to ensure animal sentience is legally recognised once the UK leaves the EU. I know the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is engaging with the relevant organisations and authorities to enhance its policies on this issue, and I will be supporting them in doing so.

A consultation will shortly be carried out on restricting live animal journeys, requiring approval for longer journeys and bringing forward welfare conditions for these journeys when they are necessary. The Government is also looking at proposals to ban the trade in pet primates, extending compulsory microchipping to cats and controlling the trade in hunting trophies from endangered animals.

As a society, we must send a message that we will not tolerate animal cruelty, and it is right that the proposed sentencing in the Animal Welfare Bill will become one of the toughest in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare. I have been pleased to see considerable public support for this bill as it is something that I look forward to supporting in Parliament.

This Bill will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and gross neglect, and will build on recent positive action to protect animals, including plans to ban third party puppy and kitten sales and updating the statutory welfare codes to tighten regulation.

Encouraging action is being taken to improve animal welfare at home and abroad and I believe this demonstrates how seriously this Government takes animal welfare.

We are a nation of animal lovers and I am pleased with the commitments to make Brexit work not just for citizens, but for the animals we love and cherish too. That's why I am thoroughly supportive of the Government's Animal Welfare Bill which passed second reading on 23rd October. When it comes back before Parliament I look forward to voting it through.

Thank you again for raising this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Higginbotham".

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley