

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF



22 March 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We write to you as a cross-party group of parliamentarians to urge your department to bring forward forest risk commodities legislation to reduce the contribution UK supply chains make to illegal deforestation. We ask you to do this without delay by preventing large businesses from using commodities already identified to be most significantly contributing to global deforestation.

We know that around 90 per cent of deforestation is driven by the production of commodities like beef and leather, soy, cocoa and palm oil. The lack of forest risk commodities protections poses an existential threat to forests around the world, which are collectively home to [80 per cent of the world's terrestrial biodiversity](#) and [support the livelihoods](#) of 1.6 billion people.

The Environment Act 2021 included welcome measures to reduce the UK's contribution to global deforestation by establishing a due diligence regime for large firms. 2023's Environmental Improvement Plan also promised action, specifically Goal 6 on using resources from nature sustainably to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation globally by 2030, by implementing legislation.

**However, despite much anticipation and some progress, more than two years later the secondary legislation needed to progress these measures has not been laid.**

Since 2021 the UK economy has contributed to [forest loss almost twice the size of Paris](#) through direct imports alone. Further delay will exacerbate our national contribution to global deforestation. We believe with this legislation consumers could instead play a positive role in reversing environmental harms, by encouraging sustainable, fair and responsible purchasing.

We call on your department to deliver the following as soon as possible:

- 1. Lay the necessary secondary legislation to implement schedule 17 of the Environment Act without delay.** Both the due diligence regime and a robust enforcement system must come into effect as soon as possible, no later than the start of 2025, with the anticipated grace period minimised.
- 2. Accept and implement the recommendations of the Environmental Audit Committee's [report](#) on tackling the UK's contribution to global deforestation.** This should include extending the scope of the due diligence regime to cover all deforestation and financial services.

The UK showed global leadership at COP26 when it led a [landmark global pledge](#) to end deforestation. To build on this legacy, this legislation must pass as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Trudy Harrison MP, Chair of the Environment APPG

Wera Hobhouse MP, Vice Chair of the Environment APPG

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Vice Chair of the Environment APPG

Olivia Blake MP, Vice Chair of the Environment APPG

Alex Sobel MP, Chair of Global Deforestation APPG

Caroline Lucas MP

Selaine Saxby MP

Baroness Boycott

Lord Randall of Uxbridge

Baroness Hayman