

Letter to Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs

Dear Mr Griffith

Re: Government legislation threatens the protection of nature

I am writing on behalf of the Storrington & Arun Valley Regional Group of the Sussex Wildlife Trust. We are a community group with over 200 members and affiliated to the Sussex Wildlife Trust to further their aims locally.

Our group is committed to advocating the protection of the landscape along with the flora and fauna of the Arun Valley. To this end we are extremely concerned about the potential impact of the **Retained EU law (Revocation and Reform Bill)**. Over the past fifty years a body of specific legislation has been built up which was designed to protect wildlife and rural landscapes. It would appear that the implementation of this Bill is designed to remove this legislation by December 2023. To date it seems no decision or plan has been outlined on either retaining the existing environmental protections or any new legislation to replace these laws at the same or higher level of protection as we have been promised. It seems like a very tall order to approve and implement the equivalent of fifty years' legislation within a year. In particular, we are concerned that there is likely to be no parliamentary oversight as this Bill enables laws to be retained or lost at the discretion of government ministers.

Further to this, we have serious concerns that the proposed new **Planning & Infrastructure Bill** is likely to relax planning laws and weaken environmental protections in specific areas of the country (the proposed 'investment zones'). Many of these sites are adjacent to areas of great importance to wildlife and it is extremely important these areas remain protected.

I am sure you will agree that the conservation of the environment and the countryside is a necessity and can never be an afterthought. By enacting the above legislation, it seems that rather than an afterthought, there has been no thought at all in regards to continuing to support the protection of wildlife.

We are asking that you use your powers of influence at government level to ensure that the Prime Minister provides specific and detailed proposals of how the Government will protect our natural environment before any of the existing laws are struck off.

Yours sincerely,

Viviane Doussy, Chair SWT Regional Group

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