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Dear Louise,

Thank you for your letter of 13 November to the Secretary of State about environmental regulation. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

I would like to thank the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) for bringing to my attention the vital work of Environmental Health Practitioners in ensuring a healthy population which goes hand-in-hand with continued economic productivity. We are grateful for the efforts that go into the work of Environmental Health Practitioners.

I am pleased to hear that you share Defra's commitment to improving the environment while stimulating the green economy. Thank you for sharing your views about the Smarter Regulation agenda. I would like to reassure you that Smarter Regulation is not the same as indiscriminate deregulation. Rather, it means only using regulation where necessary, and ensuring its design and use is both proportionate and future-proof. It is underpinned by the principles of the 'Benefits of Brexit' report, of which one is setting high standards at home and globally. As such, our approach to regulation is to minimise unnecessary burdens whilst preventing costly impacts on the foundation for all economic and societal activity: our nature, environment, and public health.

Linked to Smarter Regulation, I note that your manifesto mentions your concerns around Retained EU Law (REUL) that regulates environmental health. I would like to assure you that Defra has been clear in its commitments to uphold and not weaken environmental, animal welfare and other key protections. That is why our approach has always been to keep REUL, unless there is a good reason to either remove it from the statute book or reform it.

We remain fully committed to our global and domestic ambitions on environmental protection and, in reviewing our retained EU law, we want to ensure that environmental law is fit for purpose for the UK's unique environment and able to drive improved environmental outcomes. These objectives are guiding teams' work on REUL reforms, as are the legally binding targets in section one to section three of the Environment Act and the legal duty on Ministers to have due regard to the environmental principles policy statement when making policies using the Act's powers.

We remain committed to the environmental principles as enshrined in the Environment Act and I look forward to engaging with CIEH as we continue to drive this agenda forward.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact us about this important issue.



**REBECCA POW MP**