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20 April 2023

Dear Minister

### **Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill**

Thank you very much for your letter dated 5 April 2023, reference PO2023/05867/AD, regarding the Kept Animals Bill.

As you note, the Government's commitment to animal welfare to date is commendable, however, we are extremely concerned by the lack of clarity in your response around the progression of the Kept Animals Bill. This crucial piece of legislation delivers on several of the Conservative party's manifesto commitments, including cracking down on the illegal import of dogs and puppies and banning the keeping of primates as pets, and it vital that it becomes law.

Last year, 108,155 people signed a petition to bring the Bill back to Parliament, demonstrating the huge public support it has behind it. The significant cross-party support in place for the Bill was also demonstrated in the resulting debate on 5 December 2022. The Government confirmed in response that the Kept Animals Bill would continue its passage when parliamentary time allows. The lack of a similar commitment in your recent response, or a confirmed date for its return, combined with the reports circulating that the Bill will be split up, are extremely concerning.

The Kept Animals Bill in its current form will tackle puppy smuggling and livestock worrying, prohibit the import of dogs or cats with mutilations, including dogs with cropped ears, review zoo standards and implement a robust and effective licensing system for all privately kept primates. Its passage into law is wanted by many different groups, including vets, animal welfare charities, parliamentarians and the general public.

Given the huge degree of support behind this Bill and with a General Election scheduled for late 2024, the passage of the Kept Animals Bill into law will demonstrate not only the Conservative party's commitment to animal welfare reform, but also its ability to deliver on the things which really matter to the voters in this country.

We are therefore urging you and your colleagues in Government to deliver on this manifesto commitment and ensure that the Kept Animals Bill becomes law before the end of this Parliament.

Yours sincerely



Malcolm Morley  
BVA President

cc Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, Secretary of State, Defra  
Professor Christine Middlemiss CB, CVO

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