

**EMAIL DATED 13.11.2019:
FROM RT. HON ZAC GOLDSMITH MP, MINISTER OF STATE, DEFRA,
IN RESPONSE TO LONDON ASSEMBLY MOTION:**

Dear Chair of the London Assembly,

Thank you for your letter about the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill.

As the Minister responsible for this policy area, I was also extremely disappointed that we were not able to pass it into law in the previous Parliamentary session. However I am absolutely committed to increasing the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty from 6 months' imprisonment to 5 years' imprisonment, which will provide one of the toughest sanctions in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare. The Prime Minister is similarly committed to the issue, having raised the issue in his conference speech and included it in the Queen's speech.

We will therefore be reintroducing the Bill at the earliest opportunity, and this will build on a range of animal welfare measures we have introduced. We have delivered one of the world's toughest ivory bans, and a requirement for CCTV in all slaughterhouses. For companion animals, we have introduced new updated minimum welfare standards for pet selling, dog breeding, riding schools, animal boarding and exhibiting animals; as well as a ban on the commercial third party sale of puppies and kittens. We have also supported the successful passage of the Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Act 2019 (Finn's Law), which came into force on 8 June, and provides increased protection for service animals such as police dogs and horses. We are also consulting on banning the import of hunting trophies and the trade in pet primates.

To reiterate, we are committed to reintroducing the Bill at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Zac Goldsmith