



NATIONAL CONSUMER FEDERATION

Ranil Jayawardena MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
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29 June 2020

Dear Minister

UK/US TRADE TALKS: STANDARDISATION ISSUES FOR CONSUMERS

Firstly, congratulations on your Ministerial appointment. I am very sorry that you are no longer able to lead the TrustMark Board but we recognised when we appointed you that it would not be too long before you moved on in your political career. We wish you every success in what I understand from my work at the then Department of Trade and Industry on science and technology relations with North America, is a most challenging portfolio.

I am writing today to raise consumer concerns about the need for maintaining the safety and quality of consumer goods and services in any trade deal with the United States of America. The attached briefing paper from the National Consumer Federation sets out some “red lines” for consumers in any trade negotiations.

On the 26th February 2018 I wrote the following to the then Consumer Minister, Andrew Griffiths MP:

“The speeches by David Davies in Vienna stating that Britain will lead the race to the top and from Liam Fox that British manufacturing is a kitemark of quality mirrors what the NCF has been saying for several years. The NCF has a clear focus on raising the protection standards play in:

- *Reducing consumer detriment*
- *Increasing economic productivity*
- *And improving UK industry’s competitiveness”*

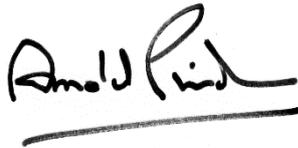
Yesterday the Prime Minister made the same statement: “We are levelling up”. The United Kingdom has the highest reputation with its consumer influenced standards. If you satisfy UK consumers who are 66% of the UK economy and do so with current standards or better, then you have a competitive edge in the global market which is also over 60% of consumer household expenditure. Through the British Standards Institution, UK consumers influence global standards developed by the International

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Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

We are very concerned that the differences between the British and United States procedures for the development of standards will, if US standards are either accepted by mutual recognition, or indeed of even greater concern, if they are accepted as superseding British Standards by their claim to be “international”, we shall be forfeiting our ability to maintain and enhance the protection of United Kingdom consumers, and our competitiveness in world markets.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arnold Pindar". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

ARNOLD PINDAR
Chair
National Consumer Federation

cc
Baroness Judith Wilcox
President
National consumer Federation

Dr Scott Steedman
Director of Standards
British Standards Institution