



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear George Eustice

**Re: End the badger cull**

I am writing to you to urge you to stop badger culling immediately. While the Government's announcement that it will cease to issue licenses from 2022 is welcome, a license lasts for 4 years and it will still be possible to renew licenses after that point.

Badger culling is an expensive, inefficient, and inhumane way of halting the spread of bovine tuberculosis (bTB). The largest study on badger culling – the 1998-2006 Randomised Badger Culling Trial – found that only 5.7% of bTB outbreaks can be attributed to badgers, and overwhelmingly the badgers that are killed do not have detectable bTB. Further studies have shown that of the badgers killed in the cull, up to nearly a quarter take longer than five minutes to die.

The Badger Trust estimate that this inefficient and cruel approach to curbing bTB has cost approximately £100m. Instead of a cull, the Government should invest in vaccination and testing programmes for cows and badgers, which are a cheaper and a far more humane approach to curbing the spread of bTB.

Badgers are an iconic native species of the UK. Rather than continue with a strategy that has killed an estimated 164,000 of these much-loved animals, the Government must take steps to protect our badger population. That must mean stopping the cull.

Yours sincerely,

Olivia Blake MP