

Finance Secretary encouraged by discussions with peers as Brexit Bill enters 2nd reading in House of Lords

Professor Drakeford visited the House of Lords on Monday (29 January) to brief peers on his concerns with the EU Withdrawal Bill along with Scottish Brexit Secretary Mike Russell, Lord Jim Wallace, the former Deputy First Minister of Scotland, Welsh Government officials and former diplomat Sir Emyr Jones Parry.

The Finance Secretary presented his concerns to peers about clause 11 and other aspects of the bill which, as it currently stands, will mean powers in areas which are devolved to the National Assembly will have new restrictions placed on them once we leave the EU.

The Welsh and Scottish governments published amendments to the bill in September but these were defeated in the House of Commons as a result of the UK government opposition to them. Despite undertakings to do so, the government has not yet brought forward its own amendments to address the concerns about clause 11 and other aspects of the bill. The Welsh and Scottish Governments are therefore urging the House of Lords to consider supporting similar amendments, if the UK government does not bring forward its own amendments which are agreed with the Devolved Administrations.

Ever since the EU Withdrawal Bill, was published, the Welsh Government has resisted its power grab in devolved areas. Working with Scottish counterparts and peers from both sides of the House of Lords, efforts will be redoubled to bring about the necessary substantial change to it.

Mark Drakeford said:

“I am encouraged by the fantastic turnout and strong support from peers yesterday. I will work hard with peers from all sides of the House to ensure they have the briefing and information necessary to address this issue. What we now need is that the UK Government will come up with a satisfactory amendment early enough to mean a fight is not necessary. Be in no doubt, however, that if such an amendment is not produced, we will do everything we can to defeat this aspect of the bill and to bring about the changes which protect the devolution settlement across the UK.”

A vote upon the inclusion of amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill will take place later in February.