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Dear all,

Thank you for your joint letter on 4 April 2022 about the links between Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) and hormone related cancers. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in responding. I am grateful for the list of studies you have provided alongside your letter, and I have shared this with the relevant policy officials.

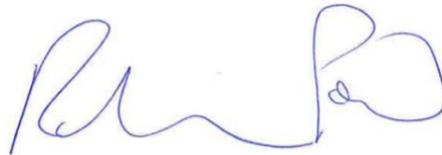
As you are aware, Defra is developing a Chemicals Strategy to set out the steps we will take to achieve safer and more environmentally sustainable management of chemicals for present and future generations. Our aim is that the Chemicals Strategy will be UK-wide, developed jointly by the four nations of the UK, subject to agreement from the Devolved Administrations. It will look to set out a direction of travel on important policies, including on EDCs.

To protect UK citizens and the environment from EDCs, we are working closely with other government departments, internationally and through commissioned research to inform policy development. This aims to consider human health and environmental risks and build consensus on future EDC policy across a range of regulatory and non-regulatory policy options. Work is being carried out by the Environment Agency to understand several chemicals groups recognised as EDCs such as bisphenols and phthalates in the UK environment.

The growing concern for EDCs, which have been linked to numerous human health and wildlife impacts, is a complex scientific issue. There is uncertainty surrounding the effects of EDC exposure from both an environmental and human health perspective, and we are contributing to international efforts to address the evidence gaps. We must consider the evidence available and draw on a range of expertise to improve testing and identification of EDCs to inform regulatory decisions and policy development. We will consider the most up to date evidence when making future policy decisions, including consideration of precautionary measures to protect vulnerable groups, and assessing measures to improve how we manage the risks posed by EDCs. Thank you for providing some useful examples of evidence in this area, which have been shared this with the relevant policy officials.

I am also grateful for your attendance at the meeting with former Defra Minister Jo Churchill MP on the 9 March 2022, to discuss the Chemicals Strategy and your 12 Key Asks for this. We will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to inform our strategic approach to EDCs, including as part of the collaborative stakeholder workshops held over the Summer to help inform a Strategy, building on the valuable engagement that has already taken place. As I understand, many NGOs have contributed to these workshops, and we look forward to continued collaboration with you on this work and further engagement on the issue of EDCs as it progresses.

Yours sincerely,



**REBECCA POW MP**