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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 16 October to the former Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent about hunting with dogs. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

The 'Hunt Havoc' describes a number of incidents across the country involving hunts and calls for the Government to amend the Hunting Act to better protect not only wild animals but the British public, their property, and right to enjoy the countryside in peace. While such incidents are clearly concerning, and although we cannot comment on individual cases, most of the incidents described in the report are of a nature that would be likely to qualify as trespass or nuisance. Other activities such as trespassing on railways, livestock worrying, and threatening or abusive behaviour are already statutory offences. The Government has made a manifesto commitment not to change the Hunting Act, and I am satisfied that it would be unnecessary to set out specific offences under the Hunting Act when they are already covered under common law and statute.

Where members of the public have evidence of such offences occurring, they should report it to the relevant authorities. Those found guilty of such offences should be subject to the full force of the law.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact us about this important issue.

REBECCA POW MP