



MEA/6 NSC

N.

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

10 June 1985

Dear Willie,

ANIMALS LEGISLATION

Although I am naturally disappointed that Cabinet decided to drop the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill from the legislative programme for the next session I fully understand the reasons for the decision. I very much welcome therefore the assurance I was given that a place would be found for the Bill in the 1986/87 session.

The absence of this measure from the Queen's Speech will, however, as I explained, put a severe strain on the fragile consensus between the moderate animal welfare lobby and the scientific community. Both will, understandably, regard their credibility and ours as having been seriously undermined. Against this background, as you know, I am anxious that I should be able to offer them something to encourage them to co-operate a little longer. I fear that by itself a restatement of the commitment to legislate in this Parliament will sound unconvincing in the light of the past history and expectations. I do think, therefore, that the only way to retain credibility on this issue is to announce at about the time of the Queen's Speech for next session that there will be a Bill in 1986/87. I appreciate that this would be an unusual step and that careful consideration will need to be given nearer the time to the form of the announcement but I hope that you and colleagues on the Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL) will agree that such an announcement should be made.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, colleagues on QL, and to Sir Robert Armstrong and First Parliamentary Counsel.

W. L.

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC, MP



Bill - Legislative Prog.