Dear **[MP]**

I hope you are staying safe and healthy during this difficult time.

I am writing about the Environment Bill, which is due to return to Parliament around 26 January.

I fully support aims to improve the environment and take better care of nature and wildlife. I think we have all learned to notice and appreciate nature in our local area over the past year – I certainly have while taking my exercise around **[town or area]. [You could mention a special moment for you or your favourite place to go.]**

However, I think one thing which is missing in the Environment Bill is an aim of improving people’s engagement with nature, so they want to protect it.

For people who are new to outdoor activities, it can be difficult to know where they can go nearby. For example, one route I would love to be able to cycle on is **[fill in example here]** – but unfortunately I can’t because there is no access for cycling.

The Outdoor Access Alliance has proposed two amendments to the Environment Bill which would make it easier for people to connect with nature:

* to include “public access to and enjoyment of the natural environment” as a priority area for target-setting
* to include public access in future environmental improvement plans

These have now been tabled by Caroline Lucas and Richard Graham.

Many existing paths and trails would be perfect for cycling, but because of their historic designation as footpaths, there is no legal right to cycle on them. Only 22% of rights of way in England are open to cyclists and horse riders, and these routes often don’t link up. The process for upgrading routes to bridleway or byway status is incredibly bureaucratic and there is little incentive to do it.

That’s why I think it’s important to set national targets to improve access to and enjoyment of the countryside. Including this as a priority area in the Environment Bill is an opportunity to broaden access to the countryside, providing huge benefits for physical and mental health while boosting the rural economy.

Lots of people have started, or got back into, cycling during the pandemic. It would be brilliant if we can capture this enthusiasm and enable more people to spend time in nature and explore the countryside around them by bike on connected, traffic-free routes.

That’s why I strongly support these proposed amendments, **[which also have the backing of the Conservative Environment Network**– *include if MP is Conservative***].**

You can find more details about the proposed amendments in the Outdoor Access Alliance briefing: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2020/02/2002_kf-rg_envt-bill-access-2nd-reading_brf.pdf>

I hope that you will join fellow MPs in supporting this, so that more people can enjoy discovering and understanding nature in **[your constituency].**

Kind regards

**[Name]**

**[Address]**

**[Postcode]**