Neil Parish MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2017, requesting updates on a number of Defra policy areas, including the reservoir safety research project my Department has commissioned.

At the start of the project we established a strong Advisory Group made up of experts from industry, reservoir panel engineers and the Environment Agency, who have been able to provide on-going advice during the lifetime of the project. As a result of their advice we extended the research to include a review of ‘cascade reservoirs’, in order to assess whether there may be any additional risk to human life where there is a series of two or more reservoirs in close proximity to each other. As a result of this change to the scope we agreed an extension to the timetable of the overall project.

The advisory group has reviewed the draft reports from the first part of the project, and these are now undergoing peer review. Once this is complete, we will assess whether any changes to the original scope of the final part are required, and assuming we take this forward, expect the full research to now be completed by the end of June 2019.

I will write to you again once we have the full research output, summarising the findings and setting out whether, and if so how, these impact on our overall policy for Reservoir Safety.

In the meantime, my Department has completed the Post Implementation Review (PIR) on the Regulations which operationalise the legislation. The provisions of the Reservoirs Act 1975 (Capacity, Registrations, Prescribed Forms, etc.) (England), Regulations 2013 and the Reservoirs Act 1975 (Exemptions, Appeals, and Inspections) (England). Regulations 2013 includes the requirements for designation of high-risk reservoirs, including risk, registration, and inspection. They also confer a right of appeal against designation status.

The review has found that the impact of the Regulations has been appropriate, and they continue to support our excellent record of dam and reservoir safety. The review also
found that the application of the Regulations by the Environment Agency has been fair and appropriate.

With every good wish

Yours,  
Mich

Michael Gove