



Rt Hon David Mundell MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
The Scotland Office
Dover House
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AU

6 March, 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

Scotch Whisky Industry Jobs and Brexit

I refer to our previous correspondence on the impact of Brexit on Scotch whisky industry jobs.

As you know, GMB Scotland have consistently called upon you and the UK Government to protect Scottish interests as the potentially damaging impact of Brexit on jobs in Scotland becomes clearer. You will recall that our recent GMB Scotland Report *Brexit and the Sectors of the Scottish Economy*, produced by the University of Strathclyde's Fraser of Allander Institute, made clear that Scotland's economic vulnerability during Brexit is distinct from that of the UK as a whole.

I was, therefore, alarmed to hear of the latest threat to geographical indicator status for vital export products, including Scotch whisky. UK Ministers have been reported as ready to drop the product's protected status as part of a future trade deal with the United States.

As you know, GI recognition means that the description 'Scotch whisky' can only be applied to whisky produced in Scotland while meeting specific production standards and verifications by the appropriate industry authorities. GMB Scotland members in the industry know that whisky and spirits manufacturing is the jewel in the crown of Scotland's food and drink sector but we are increasingly worried that the jobs of our members are viewed as expendable by those leading the development of future UK trade policy.

You know that the majority of jobs in the Scotch whisky and spirits industry are in the bottling operations of major producers like Chivas, Diageo, Dewars and Edrington. Our calls to both the UK and Scottish Governments, has consistently been for much greater focus on the potential impact of Brexit on these bottling jobs. We are deeply concerned that any erosion of Scotch whisky's protected status could have real consequences for manufacturing and the sustainability of existing employment levels.

I hope you will clarify whether you support the idea that GI protections could be given up, and what impact you think that would have on jobs in Scotland? Scotch whisky and spirits has been a major success story for UK exports but without a real focus from politicians representing Scotland then we do now risk turning a thriving industry into a historical museum trail for wealthy tourists.

Please note, that I am also copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work and the Minister for Scotland's Place in Europe in the Scottish Government. I hope to hear some reassurance from you soon that the jobs of GMB Scotland members in this industry are a priority for you and for both UK and Scottish Governments and to hear from you what will be done to protect their employment from any negative impact of Brexit on their industry.

Yours sincerely



Louise Gilmour
Senior Organiser
GMB Scotland