

George Freeman MP
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

21st November 2022

Dear Minister,

Uphold UK copyright exhaustion to support UK readers, authors, and publishers

Many congratulations on your reappointment as Minister at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. We are writing to you on behalf of all UK readers, authors, and publishers on the pressing issue of copyright exhaustion.

UK publishing is a global success story. Publishers and their authors together generate £6.7 billion for the economy, and we export more books than any other country. This success is built on the UK's gold-standard copyright and intellectual property regime, of which copyright exhaustion is a crucial part. The UK's current copyright exhaustion regime prevents the unauthorised parallel import of international copies of books to the UK, which safeguards the domestic market, motivates global exports, and protects UK readers, authors, and publishers.

As you know, the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) consulted on changes to the UK's copyright exhaustion regime last year, including considering a move to an 'international exhaustion regime'. The #SaveOurBooks campaign brought together a broad coalition of readers, authors, publishers, and other creative industries in strong support of retaining the UK's current regime. The campaign clearly evidenced that the proposed changes would cause a projected loss of up to £2.2 billion to the publishing industry, disincentivise the UK's thriving book exports, and flood the UK with international copies of books tailored to other international audiences, typically American. As you will recall from your time as IP Minister previously, we were delighted when the government concluded that the current well-functioning regime would be retained. The UK book sector breathed a huge collective sigh of relief.

However, the IPO has since announced its intention to make a final decision on copyright exhaustion. We are writing to you to urge you to continue to maintain the current regime, which underpins the UK's £6.7 billion publishing sector,

including £3.8 billion worth of exports, and is a key part of the UK's wider £116 billion creative industries. A move to an international exhaustion regime would harm the UK economy, disincentivise UK exports, and be detrimental to British readers.

The UK publishing sector and creative industries are global success stories. As the government looks to build strong and sustainable growth, we ask you to back a UK copyright regime that underpins one of the most dynamic parts of our economy, protects UK industry and exports, and promotes British culture globally.

We look forward to hearing your decision and working together on the ongoing international success of the UK creative industries.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Clarke

President, Association of Authors' Agents



Dan Conway

Chief Executive, Publishers Association



Barbara Ann Hayes

Deputy Chief Executive, Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society



Nicola Solomon

Chief Executive, Society of Authors