

Government's wrecking ball tariff plans would devastate UK economy



Low and zero tariffs would put thousands of jobs at risk

Manufacturing unions representing millions of workers have today (Wednesday) called on MPs to rule out a no-deal Brexit, warning that government plans to dramatically reduce tariffs on imported goods in the event of no deal would devastate the economy.



Under the plans announced this morning, most imports into the UK would not attract a tariff in the event of a no-deal Brexit, while tariffs on other goods will be dropped significantly.

The TUC, Unite, GMB and Community are warning that the plan would allow cheap imports to flood the market, putting thousands of jobs at risk and threatening key industries, such as steel, ceramics, tyres and glass.

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GMB National Secretary, Jude Brimble, said:

“Liam Fox’s plan to crush tariffs takes a wrecking ball to our economy. It would risk tens of thousands of jobs in our proud ceramics industry alone.

“The Government has failed to publish any impact assessments for this disastrous scheme and has not consulted with unions and businesses affected. Their claims to be working in the national interest are today in tatters.

“This grossly irresponsible plan shows their true agenda, where jobs and communities are crushed under the heel of an extreme ideological agenda. If allowed it would inevitably lead to retribution from other countries and turn the U.K. into a Wild West economy.

“That ministers think they can get away with this grossly irresponsible plan shows why MPs of all parties must put the national interest first in preventing the U.K. leaving with no deal – and why we need much stronger democratic safeguards in all trade negotiations to prevent ministers from running riot with jobs and communities.”

TUC General Secretary Frances O’Grady said:

“Ending all tariffs in a no-deal Brexit would be a hammer blow to our manufacturing industries and the communities they support.

“The government is flying blind, having introduced these plans without any consultation with the workers they will affect. We need a full and proper impact assessment.

“Ministers must not show such reckless disregard for people’s jobs.

“MPs must vote to take no deal off the table. And the prime minister needs to ditch her destructive red lines, which threaten working people’s jobs and rights.

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Unite assistant general secretary for manufacturing, Steve Turner, said:

“Theresa May and her government need to stop the economic vandalism which is threatening jobs and livelihoods by properly taking a no-deal Brexit off the table and securing tariff-free frictionless trade with Europe.

“The UK’s steel industry has been pushed to the brink because of the dumping of cheap Chinese steel, while our tyre industry is fighting for survival in the face of inferior alternatives flooding the market from overseas.

“Reducing tariffs to zero on the majority of imports, including steel, in the event of a no deal Brexit would destroy jobs and leave UK manufacturers competing with both hands tied behind their backs.

“MPs must oppose this reckless move on tariffs that imperils manufacturing communities across the UK and force the government to properly take no deal off the table.”

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

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info@gmb.org.uk

