

# Labour and Lib Dems must put aside political interests and back Brexit Bill

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The Scottish Conservatives have issued a final plea to Labour and Liberal Democrat MSPs to support the amended Withdrawal Bill when it comes to a vote in Holyrood.

Speaking ahead of the debate on the Bill, constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins has urged the two parties to put aside political interests and support a deal which will both strengthen the Scottish Parliament's powers, and protect the integrity of the United Kingdom.

He will say ahead of Tuesday's debate: "Let's be clear: Labour and Liberal Democrat support would not amount to backing for the UK Conservative Government. They would be supporting our United Kingdom and our established system of devolution."

The amended Withdrawal Bill – changed by the UK Government following cross-party pressure at Holyrood – has now been backed by the Labour Government in Wales.

Several Labour MSPs backed that deal at the time, saying it showed "co-operation" between the UK and Welsh Governments, and expressing "disappointment" that the SNP had failed to back it.

In addition, Liberal Democrat figures such as former Deputy First Minister Lord Wallace of Tankerness has described the SNP's government's failure to sign up to the plan as "regrettable", while Lord Steel, Holyrood's first Presiding Officer, has said it is "really quite a good deal".

The Scottish Conservatives will support the UK Government's amendments – and are now urging the Liberal Democrats and Labour to do likewise.

**Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said:**

"The UK Government has changed the Withdrawal Bill to accommodate fair concerns raised by all parties in Scotland.

"Those changes mean that, when we leave the EU, power will be held closer to

people and communities across the UK. The Scottish Conservatives pushed hard for these changes and we are pleased to support them.

“These plans have been backed by the Labour Government in Wales.

“They have received support from senior Labour and the Liberal Democrat figures in Holyrood and Westminster.

“It’s what businesses across Scotland want.

“The Scottish Conservatives will vote to give our consent to the amended Withdrawal Bill today.

“It’s profoundly regrettable that we don’t have a deal in Scotland to allow us to move on.

“The blame for that lies entirely with the SNP. Nicola Sturgeon has refused to compromise. It’s not in Scotland’s interests that the SNP prefers picking fights to making a deal.

“It’s obvious that the Greens will, as always, back the SNP today.

“But we would appeal to Scottish Labour and Scottish Liberal Democrat MSPs to think hard before siding with the nationalists.

“Let’s be clear: Labour and Liberal Democrat support would not amount to backing for the UK Conservative Government. They would be supporting our United Kingdom and our established system of devolution.

“So, we would make a final plea to them today – this isn’t a time for narrow political interests.

“As the Labour Government in Wales has recognised, it’s a time to put the national interest first.

“Labour and Liberal Democrat MSPs have the chance to do that today and I hope they take it.”