Food and drink

GMB statement on whisky tariffs

Responding to this morning's (Tuesday 14 January) announcement that Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) representatives will visit US government trade officials in Washington DC amid concerns of further tariff increases on single malt whisky, GMB Scotland Organiser for Whisky & Spirits, Keir Greenaway, said: "This is bad news for the Scottish economy and should also set alarm

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"This is bad news for the Scottish economy and should also set alarm bells ringing for UK-US trade negotiations post Brexit.

“This is an uncompromising US administration and there will be no special favours for the so called “special relationship” - it’s no wonder the SWA is in a panic and Scotland should be too.

“A further hike in tariffs could impact on distilleries and maturation in island, rural and northern operations, and could also harm bottling operations in the central belt too. Those workers and their communities will be seeking urgent assurances from the UK Government.

“For three years GMB Scotland has been calling on the UK Government to bring forward protective measures for our vital whisky and spirits sector but to no avail. It needs to intervene now to mitigate the impact of the previous tariff increases but also to tackle the real prospect of more. It also needs to lay down an important marker for future trade deal negotiations.

“Alongside oil and gas, food and drink manufacturing, with whisky and spirits the jewel in the crown, are the foundations of the Scottish economy but it’s massive value and importance to Scotland is perhaps something that’s lost on Boris Johnson and his Brexit Cabinet. They need to wake up now.”

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