Dear [Name],

Thank you for your letter concerning the Green Claims proposal addressed to the Executive Vice-President Timmermans and to Commissioners Sinkevičius and Breton who asked me to respond on their behalf. We appreciate your support of the Commission’s work to enable consumers to make more sustainable choices and stimulate the market for greener products.

On 22 March the Commission adopted the proposal for a Directive on substantiating environmental claims (COM(2023)166 final). This new proposal complements the consumer protection legal framework to fight greenwashing. It aims to ensure that consumers receive reliable, comparable and verifiable information to make more sustainable decisions. The proposal aims to create a level playing field and reward companies that make a genuine effort on environmental sustainability. It introduces specific common rules for substantiation, communication and verification of business-to-consumer voluntary claims on environmental performance of products, services and organisations and rules on environmental labelling schemes.

The Green Claims proposal does not prescribe the use of a single method to substantiate environmental claims. Instead, it sets out specific requirements that an assessment underlying such claims should meet to ensure it is robust and scientifically sound, including requirements on the quality of data to be used in the assessment. As regards the Environmental Footprint (EF) methods, the proposal recognises that there may be areas where all the environmental impacts or aspects of a product are not fully covered by them. Examples as regards food and agricultural products are impacts on biodiversity or positive externalities of extensive farming.

Let me highlight that the rules on substantiating green claims would be without prejudice to other EU rules on environmental sustainability, such as the existing Ecolabel and Organic Label, or the forthcoming framework for a sustainable food system, including possible future rules on sustainability labelling of food. As regards the framework for a sustainable food system, the Commission is currently working on an impact assessment where different policy options are being assessed in terms of their economic, social and environmental impacts.
Yours faithfully,