



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
From the Secretary of State for Environment, Food  
and Rural Affairs

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Roseanna Cunningham MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment,  
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Scottish Government  
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20th September 2017

*For Roseanna*

Thank you for your letter of 5 September about the Scottish Government's commitment to develop a deposit return scheme.

I would like to congratulate you on your ambitious programme of work.

I share your commitment to tackling litter and increasing recycling rates. As part of the Litter Strategy for England published on 10 April, my Department has established a working group to look at different voluntary and economic incentives to improve the recycling and reuse of packaging, and to reduce the incidence of commonly littered items. For its first piece of work, we have asked this group to look at the costs, impacts and benefits of different types of deposit and reward and return schemes for drinks containers. The working group will be consulting widely in developing its analysis and recommendations. The work being undertaken by Zero Waste Scotland will be a valuable addition to the evidence in this area, and I hope that, in return, the outputs of our working group will be helpful for your Government's work.

I agree that we need to jointly consider what impacts a scheme may have on cross-border issues. I also think it is important to understand how a deposit return scheme would work alongside our existing waste regulations, including those for packaging waste, which currently cover England, Scotland and Wales as you will know. I warmly welcome your offer of cooperation between officials to share information as work on deposit return schemes proceeds. I have passed your letter to the team responsible for taking this work forward in Defra and they will contact your policy team directly.

We are firmly committed to taking further action to prevent waste and reduce the environmental impact of single use packaging. Thérèse Coffey is convening a roundtable with coffee cup stakeholders and we will be happy to share the outputs of that discussion.

Defra will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government on these issues, and to collaborate widely with Devolved Administrations and other partners across the country in delivering our shared ambitions to improve waste and recycling outcomes and promote resource efficiency in the UK.

With every good wish,

*and congratulations again on your leadership,*

Michael Gove

*Yours,*

*Michael*





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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural  
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5 September 2017

Dear Michael,

### **Deposit return system for drinks containers**

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government has been giving careful consideration to the possible introduction of a deposit return system for drinks containers. I announced in June 2017 that we would continue this work through detailed examination of possible systems, overseen by a stakeholder steering group.

As I know that this is a policy area that you are also taking a close interest in, I am therefore writing to update you on the Scottish Government's position. As announced in the Programme for Government '*A nation with ambition*' today, we have committed to developing a deposit return scheme designed to increase recycling rates and reduce littering and implement it across Scotland. This is, of course, a step change in ambition, though this will build on the work we have already done and we will continue to work with stakeholders on how to achieve this.

Our priority is to identify a system which can operate in Scotland's unique environment. Through research and stakeholder engagement, undertaken on our behalf by Zero Waste Scotland, we have identified a number of potential cross-border elements – such as supply chains and fraud prevention. We therefore recognise that there is merit in considering these issues together with other administrations across the UK, particularly during the system design phase of our work. To this end, I would like to invite engagement at an official level to share experience and knowledge, and consider how links can be made between the work we are leading and your own considerations.

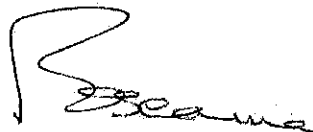
The Scottish Government has also committed to going further in our efforts to end the 'throw-away' culture, by examining how to reduce demand for single use items, such as disposable coffee cups. We intend to appoint an expert panel to advise on the use of charges, similar to the successful plastic bag charge in Scotland, with the goal of encouraging long term and sustainable changes in consumer behaviour.



I would like to see constructive engagement between our officials as these important producer responsibility initiatives are taken forward.

I am writing in similar terms to Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary, Department for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs.

Yours



**Roseanna Cunningham**