

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Committee
Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

2 May 2024

Dear Edward,

I am writing to update the Committee on progress with Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and recent publications.

The UK Government announced last week, on 25 April, an update on its DRS setting out their revised delivery timeline and providing details on interoperability across UK schemes.

Following the UK Government's decision to prevent Scotland's DRS from progressing as planned, my officials have been working closely with their counterparts across the four nations to design and agree interoperable deposit return schemes. These schemes will drive the transition to a circular economy by increasing recycling, reducing littering, offering greater opportunities to collect higher quality materials for recycling and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The preparations Scotland had put in place to deliver DRS in Scotland have helped inform the four nations approach, based on significant engagement and feedback from business. As a result of this work we have published, along with the other nations of the UK, a Joint Policy Statement which outlines the four nations commitment to interoperable schemes and our agreed interoperable policy positions. It does not include material scope as there is still no agreed approach to glass within the schemes across the four nations. It should be noted we have always been clear that interoperability does not necessarily mean identical schemes.

It is also worth noting that we would have seen the launch of a DRS in Scotland last month with an "all in" scheme covering metal, PET plastic and glass. However, the UK Government's decision to remove glass from its own scheme and to inexplicably and undemocratically deny Scotland a full exclusion from the Internal Market Act (IMA) at the eleventh hour, meant that that we were unable to launch Scotland's DRS with glass in March 2024 as planned. Since the UK Government continues to use the IMA to block the implementation of devolved policy and has indicated it does not anticipate granting an exclusion to any nation on this matter, we have no choice but to launch a more limited DRS

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

than Parliament voted for to ensure that we can still realise the benefits from DRS. Therefore, we have agreed to commence a DRS in Scotland without glass on day one, assuming this remains the position across all nations of the UK.

The UK Government has also announced a revised date for the launch of the Deposit Return Scheme from October 2025 to October 2027. While predictable, this is nevertheless disappointing especially when one considers that independent Ireland launched their Deposit Return Scheme in February this year. However, we remain committed to delivering Deposit Return Schemes that are interoperable across each nation in the UK, and in light of the undermining of devolution represented by the Internal Market Act, Scotland will align with the delayed UK launch date.

We will make amending legislation, where required, to give effect to the policy positions set out in the Joint Policy Statement once the UK Government has passed their legislation. Any such amending legislation will require approval by the Scottish Parliament.

I hope that the information provided here is helpful to the Committee. Ministers will continue to update the Committee on our progress towards the launch of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI MCALLAN

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

