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23 March 2026

Dear Edward,

## **Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) (Scotland) Regulations 2026**

Thank you for the Committee's consideration of the Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 at your meeting on 17 March 2026. I am pleased to provide further details to answer the Committee's queries.

### **What monitoring is planned and how will the effectiveness of the ban be measured?**

Section 19 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects arising as a result of the implementation of a plan, programme or strategy. The purpose of the monitoring is to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared in order to inform the development of the Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) (Scotland) Regulations 2026. In order to ensure the intended benefits of a ban are being realised, the SEA proposed the following monitoring, as outlined in the SEA Post-adoption Statement<sup>1</sup>:

- Beach litter monitoring – beach survey data from organisations such as the Marine Conservation Society will continue to be used to monitor changes in numbers of wet wipes found on Scottish beaches following the implementation of the ban.
- Regional trends – data analyses by Marine Directorate will continue to be used to demonstrate changes of numbers of wet wipes found on Scottish beaches over time.

The Marine Conservation Society's annual beach survey results show evidence of existing bans on single-use plastic products making a positive impact on these items being found as litter.

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<sup>1</sup> [Ban on the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic: Strategic Environmental Assessment Post-Adoption Statement - gov.scot](#)

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The 2025 report<sup>2</sup> showed that across the whole of the UK, the number of single-use plastic items being found fell by 18% between 2024 and 2025. This followed bans on items such as plastic cutlery, plates, and straws being introduced in Scotland in 2022 as well as similar bans in England and Wales. The 2023 survey results recorded a decrease of 16% in the number of plastic-stemmed cotton buds found between 2022 and 2023. This followed a ban introduced in Scotland in 2019, as well as subsequent bans in England and Wales.

**Whether the Scottish Government consider there to be any challenges with Scotland's later date and products being moved and dumped in Scotland during the gap between implementation periods in the other nations and the ban coming into force in Scotland?**

Working across the four nations, we remained in alignment on the purpose and scope of each ban, the definitions used, and the length of the period of transition to enable manufacturers and retailers to adjust. It was recognised that it would not be feasible to align dates for legislation to be introduced, in particular as the Welsh Government was following a separate legal procedure (amending primary legislation). However, we remained in as close alignment as was possible given the separate challenges each nation faced throughout this process.

The bans will only be enforceable when all four have come into effect, due to the implications of the UK Internal Market Act 2020. As a result, a ban on the sale and supply of wet wipes containing plastic across the UK will come into force when the final ban takes effect in August 2027, as you have noted. Until this time sales of these products will continue to occur legally, and we would not anticipate challenges arising from unusual cross-border movements.

**If the Scottish Government does see this as a risk, how do they propose to mitigate or address it?**

We do not consider this to be a risk due to the alignment set out above.

I hope this information provides the details required to fully answer your comments.

Yours sincerely,



**GILLIAN MARTIN**

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<sup>2</sup> [Beachwatch 2025 Results | Marine Conservation Society](#)  
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