



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 03459 33 55 77 or
08459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Our ref: RF17044

2 January 2015

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Meetings between Defra and the Oxo-biodegradable industry regarding the carrier bag charge

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 20 November 2014, about the number of times Defra officials have met with representatives of the Oxo-biodegradable industry to discuss the carrier bag charge. As you know, we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). I apologize for the delay in responding to you.

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

In response to your request I can inform you that Defra officials have participated in three meetings which included representatives of the Oxo-biodegradable industry on subjects related to the carrier bag charge and the exemption for biodegradable bags.

You may be interested to know some of the further details regarding these meetings, which I attach at Annex A.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs and the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex B, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex C giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.



If you have any queries about this letter please contact the address below.

Yours sincerely,

Defra FOIA and EIRs Team

InformationRequests@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Meetings between Defra Officials and Oxo-biodegradable industry representatives

Since May 2010, Defra officials have participated in three meetings including representatives of the oxo-biodegradable industry to discuss issues related to the plastic bag charge and/or the exemption for biodegradable bags, as follows:

- 10 September 2013. Industry workshop including government officials, individual plastics companies, representatives of the plastics industry (including the oxo-biodegradable industry) and academics. This workshop aimed to develop an understanding of what the ideal biodegradable carrier bag might look like, the conditions it needs to degrade and its impact on the waste stream.
- 29 September 2014. Stakeholder advisory group including government officials, representatives of the plastics industry (including the Oxo-biodegradable association) and academics. The aim of this group is to review existing standards for biodegradable films and consider the formulation of a standard for the exemption of biodegradable bags from the plastic bag charge.

8 December 2014. Follow up stakeholder advisory group as per 29 September 2014 meeting.

Annex B

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents produced by Defra will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown copyright information can be re-used under the [Open Government Licence](#). For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information please see [The National Archives website](#).

Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

Annex C

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF