



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

T 08459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

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**From Dan Rogerson**

Parliamentary Under Secretary for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

Dear Stakeholder,

I have recently been appointed as the Minister with responsibility for resource and environmental management. I have been involved in this area for many years, as co-chair of the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group, and as a member of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee.

This experience means I am well aware of the great work being done across the sector to reduce waste, build efficiency and create a vibrant and growing sector. I am acutely aware of the role business plays in helping the economy make the most of the resources available to it. We generate more than 177 million tonnes of waste every year in England alone- a poor use of our resources. I believe a sustainable and resource efficient economy can and should be delivered with little Government intervention as industry responds to the clear business case for action.

The resource management industry is a growing one. The UK waste and recycling sector already employs over 100,000 people and generates over £12bn a year in sales. Between 2009-2012 annual sales growth from the sector averaged 2.2%, with forecast annual growth of around 3.5% until 2015/16.

Across the board, we have made good progress. Waste generation is gradually declining in England. Household waste recycling rates are up from 12% in 2001 to over 40% in 2012. The amount of waste going to landfill is decreasing.

The success of the Courtauld Commitment shows what can be achieved when businesses act to reduce waste. To date, the first two phases of this voluntary agreement have successfully prevented 2.3 million tonnes of waste with a value of around £3.5 billion, and 1 million tonnes less packaging has been used. I am also encouraged by the recent work of the Circular Economy Task Force, whose report 'Resource Resilient UK' made a number of recommendations to investors and businesses, as well as government.



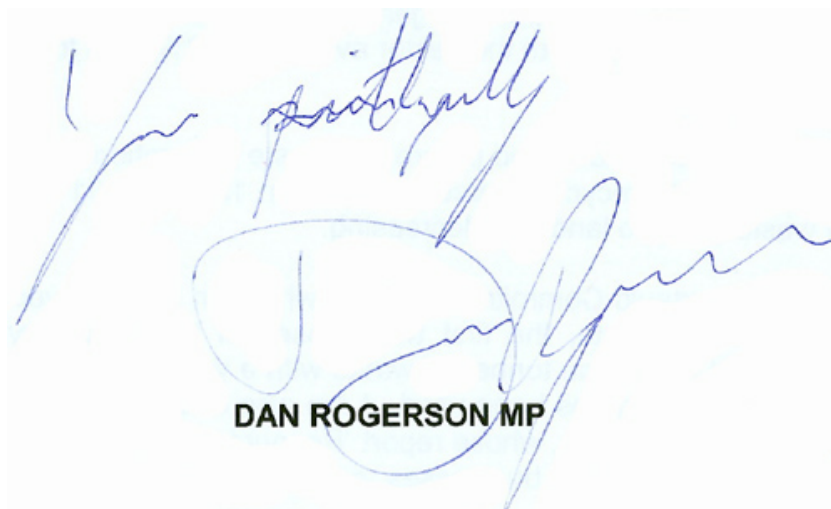
However, these are challenging times, and the Government has had to prioritise its work to make the best of public funding. It is because of this that I am writing to you today. I regret that the first contact I will have with many of you is to inform you of reductions to our activities. However, I wish to reassure you that this area is one of my priorities.

We have been reassessing Defra's activities on waste management for 2014/15 to focus on the essentials that only Government can and must do. This recognises that Government's role should reduce as businesses increasingly realise the economic and commercial opportunities that arise from resource efficiencies and tackling environmental challenges. It also reflects that public funding is under extreme pressure and Government must ensure that this limited funding is focussed on the key priorities.

From April 2014 we will be stepping back in areas where businesses are better placed to act and there is no clear market failure. Defra will therefore not have the capacity to take forward new policy work in areas such as commercial and industrial waste and construction and demolition waste, as well as proactive energy from waste policy development. Our current programmes of work on anaerobic digestion and food waste are nearing completion; the responsibility for taking work forward will largely rest with the industries concerned. In addition, given the strong financial case for Local Authorities to realise efficiencies from their waste contracts, we will be reducing the amount of generic support we provide to them in this and related areas.

We will continue to support business, including by ensuring the negotiation and implementation of proportionate EU waste agreements. This is likely to be a key priority over the next year as the European Commission brings forward proposals on waste and resource efficiency. We are pressing ahead with Materials Recovery Facility regulations to drive up the quality of recycled material and help support growth and the economy by maximising the economic value of the waste material collected. As previously announced, Defra will also continue funding WRAP to enable it to support businesses in realising the benefits of resource efficiency. Following the publication of the Waste Prevention Programme for England later this year, we will also be taking forward a limited programme of work on waste prevention, focusing our attention on the areas where action is clearly for Government.

I look forward to meeting many of you over the next few months to discuss how we can work together to manage resources more sustainably to promote growth, whilst protecting human health and the environment.



**DAN ROGERSON MP**

