



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**Rebecca Pow MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577  
[defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk](mailto:defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP  
Queens Mill  
1 Aire Street  
Castleford  
WF10 1JL

Your ref: JM/YC55101  
Our ref: MC2021/06871/MP

23 April 2021

Dear Yvette,

Thank you for your letter of 10 March about the impact of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) on the glass manufacturing industry. I apologise for the delay in responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

In its 2019 manifesto, the Government committed to introduce a DRS for drinks containers to incentivise people to recycle plastic and glass. We are seeking powers to introduce deposit return schemes in the Environment Bill, which can be set up to sustain, promote or secure an increase in recycling or reuse of materials and to reduce the incidence of littering or fly-tipping. We expect the introduction of a DRS to deter littering of in-scope containers; increase recycling of in-scope containers; provide higher quality recycle for reprocessors; and actively change consumer behaviours with potential knock-on effects to other environmental activities.

From the responses to the first consultation, there was strong support for inclusion of glass in a DRS (86% favoured its inclusion). However, we recognise the concerns raised by industry on the inclusion of glass, both through responses to the consultation and in subsequent engagement, similar to those you have noted in your letter. Since the first consultation, we have conducted further cost benefit analysis on the inclusion of glass. The interim findings demonstrate that the inclusion of glass in the long term has a higher value than not including it given the potential for increased collection and recycling and the resulting greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The UK has an excellent kerbside collection system in place, but glass bottles collected in this way are still vulnerable to cross contamination from other materials. Including glass in a DRS would reduce this cross contamination and result in more, higher quality glass being available for recycling.

We have continued developing proposals for a DRS using further evidence and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, and a second consultation on the topic was published on 24 March. This consultation is currently live and includes further information on the specific details and design of the scheme, including the materials proposed to be included in scope (PET plastic bottles, glass bottles, and aluminium and steel cans). This consultation is accompanied by a consultation impact assessment. We will continue to finalise our analysis this year in preparing a final impact assessment and Government response to the consultation which we aim to publish later this year.

On the point regarding equality in engaging with the DRS, we want a scheme to be equally accessible for all users, and for no consumers to experience difficulties in returning empty drinks containers to receive their deposit refund. In a well-functioning DRS, it should be made as easy as possible for consumers to return drinks containers and obtain their deposit refund. The consultation gives greater details of our proposed approach to return points and deposit redemption.

Thank you for the invitation to discuss this matter further. Unfortunately, due to existing diary commitments, I will not be able to accept a meeting invitation at this current time.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.



**REBECCA POW MP**