

# The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

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Lyndsay Parker  
Zero Waste Scotland

By email

25 June 2015

Dear Ms Parker

## DEPOSIT RETURN SYSTEM – CALL FOR EVIDENCE

### Summary

APRS fully supports the introduction of a deposit return system (DRS) for drinks containers in Scotland, for the reasons set out below. We wish to take this opportunity to submit the attached results of a February 2015 poll, which clearly demonstrates substantial Scottish public support for the introduction of a DRS.

### Litter Reduction

The principal reason why APRS supports the introduction of a DRS in Scotland is that it would reduce the amount of litter in the countryside. This is an issue which we know greatly concerns many of our members. Litter spoils the beauty of our rural landscapes, which form the setting for many peoples' lives, and on which many of their livelihoods depend.

We know from experience elsewhere in the world that DRSs reduce the amount of litter in the countryside. For example in New York State in the USA, drinks container litter reduced by 70% after a DRS was introduced. And in Australia in 2012, in New South Wales, which did not have a DRS at the time, drinks containers made up 1 in every 3 items of litter, whereas in South Australia, which did have a DRS, the figure was only 1 in 12.

Litter is ugly and unpopular with local communities, so a well-run DRS would help every community in Scotland, whether rural or urban, look more attractive and be more appealing to live in, work in and visit. Improving our international reputation by reducing litter will benefit our largest industry, tourism – spending by tourists contributes £5 billion to Scottish GDP.

Clearing up litter currently requires substantial effort by local authorities across Scotland, placing unnecessary financial burdens on local Council Tax payers. A DRS would virtually eradicate drinks container litter from our beaches, fields and verges, as such systems have done around the world, and would therefore save both Councils and the public substantial sums across the country.

### Other Benefits

Experience around the world shows that as well as reducing litter, DRSs boost recycling rates, save energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They reduce the unnecessary waste of valuable resources and help to develop better attitudes to resources and waste among the public, thereby supporting progress towards a circular economy. The recent feasibility study by Eunomia demonstrates convincingly that there are no major legal or technical barriers to creating a Scottish

[The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, founded in 1926](#)

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DRS, and that there would be positive economic benefits for job creation, for Scotland's recycling networks and businesses, for the rest of the circular economy, and in cost savings for local authorities. The report also included important conclusions about protecting smaller shops, which would be particularly important in rural parts of Scotland.

We consider it relevant to note here that the carrier bag charge in Scotland has been very successful, reducing plastic bag use by 80% in its first 6 months, despite arguments from major retailers before its introduction that it could not be made to work.

### Polling Evidence

In February 2015 Survation carried out a poll on behalf of APRS to examine the level of support amongst the Scottish population for the introduction of a DRS. I am pleased to submit the attached results of this poll to you now, in response to your call for evidence on the anticipated impacts of a DRS, including in relation to public acceptability. You will see from the results that over 78% of those who expressed a view either strongly support or somewhat support the introduction of a DRS in Scotland.

### Conclusion

Scotland now needs a real game-changer in tackling litter and increasing recycling rates. It seems to us that a DRS would be just that – the obvious next step in encouraging people to change towards more sustainable behaviour, and exactly the sort of thing to which we should aspire in a modern, progressive Scotland. Our polling evidence clearly demonstrates overwhelming Scottish public support for introducing a DRS, and we urge Scottish Ministers to do so as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



John Mayhew MA MSc DipTP MRTPI  
**Director**

### APRS - Scotland's Countryside Champion

APRS is the charity which promotes the care of **all** of Scotland's rural landscapes.

#### Our aims:

- Protect and enhance Scotland's rural landscapes for future generations
- Promote effective planning and landscape protection systems in Scotland
- Encourage genuinely sustainable development in rural Scotland
- Raise awareness of the importance of Scotland's landscapes to its people and economy
- Promote the activity of land managers who care for Scotland's landscapes

#### What we do:

- Work in partnership with individuals, other charities, local authority, government and public bodies
- Take an active part in national policy development and advocacy
- Advise members of the public on how to respond to proposals which affect their local landscapes
- Publicise our work to our members and beyond through our website, quarterly newsletter *Rural Scotland* and regular email bulletins

## The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

### Survation Poll on deposit return system

Sample size: 1011

Sample population: Scottish population 16+

Fieldwork dates: 12th - 17th February 2015

**Q. Elsewhere, including in Denmark, Canada and Germany, a small deposit is paid to retailers when you buy drinks cans and bottles and fully refunded by retailers when you return the container, in order to increase recycling and reduce litter. To what extent would you support or oppose the introduction of a similar type of system in Scotland?**

	All	CON	LAB	SNP
<b>Strongly support</b>	39%	31%	37%	46%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	36%	45%	39%	31%
<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>	12%	15%	12%	13%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	5%	3%	4%	5%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	3%	5%	3%	2%
<b>Don't know</b>	5%	2%	5%	3%