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Wildlife and Countryside LINK

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2 Marsham Street
SW1 1PD

12th March 2024

Dear Minister Moore,

Re: Opportunity to deliver the UK's deposit return scheme

I write as Reloop's UK and Ireland Director, together with a group of manufacturers, retailers and environmental organisations to urge you to seize the opportunity to ensure the timely delivery of a deposit return scheme for the United Kingdom.

Reloop is an international organisation with specific expertise in deposit return systems for beverage packaging, so we have followed the progress of your government's policy on this with interest. The Government's intention to introduce deposits in England & Northern Ireland by October 2025, alongside parallel systems planned for Scotland and Wales, is a reform that is essential to boosting economic, social and environmental well-being up and down the country. We urge the Government to deliver its 2019 manifesto pledge by laying legislation this spring, ahead of the next General Election.

Reloop's Global Deposit Book 2022 shows that a well-designed deposit system can bring collection rates of drinks containers up to 90%. Considering drinks containers make up 75% of litter (Keep Britain Tidy, 2022) and are found on 93% of UK beaches (Marine Conservation Society, 2022), it is essential this packaging is prevented from littering our streets, polluting our waterways and ultimately, our precious oceans. From day one, communities and individuals will see dramatic improvements in their local environmental quality and experience the economic and health benefits improved pride of place can bring. Recent data from Latvia found that its DRS, reduced littered plastic bottles in coastal areas by 61%, just two years after the scheme was implemented.

Another huge opportunity comes to the UK business sector. Last year, your Government reported that over 4,000 companies registered for the Plastics Packaging Tax. Over half of these were manufacturing products solely in the UK and yet struggled to meet the 30% recycled content requirement. By introducing a closed-loop recycling system, the UK can begin to foster a thriving market for recyclables and reduce the burden the current Plastic Packaging Tax has on some of the country's most fragile small and medium-sized businesses. Support across all socio-economic groupings for the scheme has not wavered. Recent YouGov polling suggests that 66% of all respondents favoured its immediate introduction, with only 13% opposed to the scheme entirely.

As Governments across the globe plan and deliver deposit schemes, the UK must not fall behind. In the last two years alone, we've seen systems launch in Latvia, Slovakia, Romania, Malta and Hungary. Within the next 18 months we'll see new systems in Poland, Greece, Austria and Portugal. This February, Ireland launched their deposit return system, named 'Re-turn', which is expected to significantly boost the recycling rate of plastic bottles (PET), aluminium and steel cans across the country.

We need to ensure that our businesses and workforce can profit from the same opportunities enabled by Governments elsewhere: this widespread and well-proven approach will provide

much-needed growth up and down the country. The signatories of this letter, representing industry, recycling experts and environmentalists are united in urging you to deliver a Statutory Instrument for England and Northern Ireland this spring, to deliver deposits as promised.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Jenni Hume, UK and Ireland Director of Reloop

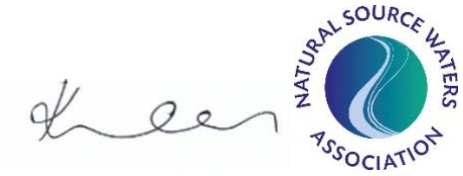
Please send replies to jenni.hume@reloopplatform.org

This letter is supported by the following organisations:

Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link

Muntazir Dipoti, National President, The Federation of Independent Retailers: The Fed

Dusan Stojankic, VP, Coca-Cola Great Britain



Kinvara Carey, General Manager, Natural Source Waters Association

Gavin Partington, Director General, British Soft Drinks Association

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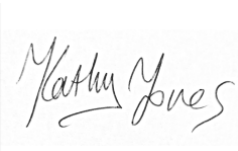
WDC WHALE AND DOLPHIN CONSERVATION

Chris Butler-Stroud, CEO, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.

Allison Ogden-Newton OBE, Chief Executive, Keep Britain Tidy



APRS Scotland's countryside charity

Kat Jones, Director, Action to Protect Rural Scotland (APRS)

MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Sandy Luk, CEO, Marine Conservation Society

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Owen Derbyshire, CEO, Keep Wales Tidy

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Barry Fisher, CEO, Keep Scotland Beautiful

The Rivers Trust

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, The Rivers Trust

RIVERACTION

James Wallace, CEO, River Action

Dr. Ian Humphreys, Chief Executive, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

Areeba Hamid and Will McCallum, UK CEO, Greenpeace

Ros Clubb, Head of Wildlife, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

Mary Rice, Executive Director, Environmental Investigation Agency UK

Giles Bristow, CEO, Surfers Against Sewage

Jamie Christon, CEO, Chester Zoo

Steve Hynd, Policy Manager, City to Sea