29th July 2024

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

As a group of environmental organisations, manufacturers and retailers, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Prime Minister.

We were pleased to see your commitment to "reduce waste by moving to a circular economy" as outlined in your manifesto, building on your party's long-term commitment to implementing a deposit return scheme. In light of this, we would like to reiterate our unwavering support for the scheme, which has undergone extensive development within Defra. With Secondary Legislation ready to be implemented, it can be a quick and ready win for a government looking to hit the ground running.

Deposit return schemes have the potential to reduce littering of drinks containers (which make up 75% of litter by volume[1]) by up to 85%.[2] More than 40 countries have successfully implemented a deposit return scheme, with the best designed seeing return rates of up to 98% as a result.[3] The environmental case is clear, and any delay to deposit return means more avoidable damage and waste – each year, nearly 9 billion drinks containers fail to be recycled – ending up in landfill, incineration or as litter.[4]

The economic case for deposit return is clear. It is an industry-funded scheme, meaning that the cost for establishing and running the scheme will be met by drinks producers, not the taxpayer. It will lead to the creation of an estimated 3,000-4,000 green jobs in the collection and sorting of materials.[5] And according to Defra's own calculations, DRS will deliver a Net Present Value of between £3.58-5.88bn.[6]

Your government has a target of reaching Net Zero by 2050, a target that is supported by 72% of the public.[7] For this to be achieved, stagnant recycling rates will need to rise significantly, and deposit return will provide infrastructure to do just that at no cost to the taxpayer, providing drinks producers with the high quality recyclate they need to increase recycled plastic content in their products.

Deposit return schemes are a highly visible, highly popular intervention on the environment – just 5 years after implementation in Lithuania it enjoys 98% public support, and a combined survey of 34 international polls showed an 87.5% average level of support for existing deposit return schemes.[8] Recent polling by YouGov shows that 69% of the UK public currently supports deposit return.[9] Ireland has also recently introduced a scheme which sees nearly 3 million containers returned daily.[10]

We stand ready to offer our full support to your Government as it moves forward with its plans to bring in a UK-wide deposit return scheme.

[1] LITTER COMPOSITION SURVEY - EQ0121 (defra.gov.uk)
[2] Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers moves a step closer - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[3] reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/RELOOP_Global_Deposit_Book_11I2022_P1.pdf
[4] Public Perceptions of a Deposit Return Scheme | Keep Britain Tidy (figure updated to incorporate 2023 sales data)
[5] Microsoft Word - DRS Factsheet-Jobs-27Jan2021.docx (reloopplatform.org)
[6] Impact assessment: Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme on beverage containers (defra.gov.uk)
[7] Survey Report (yougov.com)
[8] fact-sheet-public-support-for-drs.pdf (reloopplatform.org)
[9] Public-opinion-research-on-DRS-May24.pdf (reloopplatform.org)
[10] IOM3 | Ireland's deposit return scheme ramps up

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T 020 8076 9262 **W** https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/ **Registered Charity no** 1071737
Registered Company no 3496361 **VAT Reg no** 849 7501 88

Yours sincerely,

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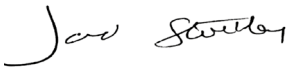

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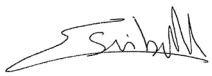
Vice-President of Franchise Operations,
Coca-Cola Great Britain and Ireland



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Giles Bristow
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Jenni Hulme
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Jim Bligh
Director of Corporate Affairs and
Packaging, Food and Drink Federation

Julian Hunt
VP of Public Affairs, Communications &
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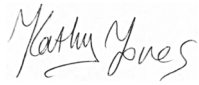

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