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Edward Mountain MSP  
Convener  
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

28 April 2023

Dear Convener

## **Classification of Zero Waste Scotland as a public sector organisation – decision by the Office for National Statistics**

I am writing to advise you and members of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee of a decision by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to classify Zero Waste Scotland as a public sector organisation.

The ONS decision is based on its assessment of the characteristics of Zero Waste Scotland as an organisation, including how the body is funded and the degree to which its functions are based on government activity.

As Scotland's circular economy body, Zero Waste Scotland exists to lead Scotland in using products and resources responsibly. Zero Waste Scotland provides expert advice to the Scottish Government, which helps to shape policy and programmes, and oversees the management of key funds, for example the Recycling Improvement Fund. In this regard, Zero Waste Scotland's activities are heavily shaped by Scottish Government priorities and government funding represents the majority of the organisation's income.

For the sake of clarity, classification of an organisation into the public sector is a statistical matter that does not have any direct implications in areas such as ownership, legal status, or management structure.

The only immediate and direct change will be in relation to how Zero Waste Scotland is included in public sector reporting; thereafter, we look forward to working closely with Zero Waste Scotland colleagues on a transition process to identify the most appropriate legal status and structure that will support Zero Waste Scotland's main functions.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

We do not anticipate any material impact on delivery operations as a result of the transition process given Zero Waste Scotland's existing close alignment to public body practice.

A primary aim of the transition will be to ensure governance and accountability arrangements reflect Zero Waste Scotland's status as a public sector organisation and its important role as a key delivery partner to the Scottish Government.

I understand the ONS will be communicating its decision directly with Zero Waste Scotland today (28<sup>th</sup> April, 2023). Given that this decision will, in due course, lead to a change in Zero Waste Scotland's relationship with the Scottish Parliament, I wanted to bring this to the Committee's attention at the earliest opportunity.

I am happy to respond to any questions the Committee may have in relation to this matter.

Kind regards

**LORNA SLATER**

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