



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP  
Secretary of State for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs  
UK Government

**Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
Committee**

c/o Clerk to the Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email only

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26 July 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

**Invitation to a meeting of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee**

I am writing to invite a representative of the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to attend a meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to discuss Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and intergovernmental relations.

On June 30, the Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland to request a representative of the UK Government to attend a session on DRS. His response on 20 July indicated that DEFRA were leading the UK Government's work regarding a UK deposit-and-return scheme and therefore would be best placed to answer questions the Committee may have on these matters.

The Committee has stepped up its scrutiny of the DRS over the past three months with the aim of assessing the scheme's readiness ahead of its previous launch dates. So far, we have taken evidence from the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity on two occasions: 14 March and 13 June, and from the scheme's administrator, Circularity Scotland, on 28 March. We have also received several written submissions from industry stakeholders.

In light of the recent announcement to pause the launch date for the scheme to October 2025, the Committee has agreed that hearing from the UK Government is an important next step in understanding the future direction for DRS. Holding an evidence session with the relevant UK Minister would provide an opportunity for the Committee to ascertain how a UK-wide approach to deposit-and-return would operate in practice, and how interoperability will be achieved across all four nations.

Another key theme which has emerged from our recent scrutiny of DRS has been intergovernmental relations. We have agreed to undertake scrutiny of

the Resource and Waste Common Framework as part of our upcoming work on the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill. Recent events around DRS have also highlighted the strong interplay between Common Frameworks and the UK Internal Markets Act 2020 (UKIMA) with regards to policy divergence. We are keen to learn more about the processes set out in Resources and Waste Common Framework and UKIMA to establish the extent to which they have supported collaboration and managed disputes between Governments on issues such as DRS, or whether further work to improve the ground-rules of intergovernmental cooperation in this area is needed.

The Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with a representative of DEFRA at a meeting after the summer recess. If possible, it would be our preference for this to take place sometime in September or early October so as to enable this to take place before we next consider Scottish Government subordinate legislation on the DRS. I would be grateful if a DEFRA Minister was able to accept this invitation and, if so, the clerks will be in touch with the relevant officials to make the necessary arrangements.

It would be helpful for work planning purposes if a response could be forthcoming by 16 August.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Mountain MSP  
Convener  
**Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee**