

Consultation on recovery and recycling targets for packaging waste

Producer Responsibility Unit
Defra
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London SW1P 2AL

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Dear Consultee,

We are pleased to invite you to participate in a consultation on proposals to increase recovery and recycling targets under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations.

These are UK Regulations and the proposals are aligned with the waste policies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In June 2011 Defra published the Review of Waste Policy in England¹. The Review highlighted the commitment to being the greenest Government ever and addressed issues of how to deal with our waste in the face of broader concerns such as material security, energy, climate change and environmental protection. The Review acknowledged that significant progress has been made in terms of reducing the volume of waste sent to landfill and increasing recycling rates, but pressed to go further and faster. With specific relation to packaging, the Review highlighted that voluntary action is also an important driver of behaviour change on packaging. Survey after survey shows that consumers believe packaging is a big environmental problem. The Government will work with business to encourage – where appropriate – greater use of recycled content in packaging, as well as to make packaging more recyclable.

The Wales overarching waste strategy document 'Towards Zero Waste' published in June 2010 outlined the necessary actions to reach Wales' ambition of becoming a high recycling nation by 2025 and a zero waste one planet nation by 2050. The Welsh Government is working with partners to decrease the environmental impact of packaging, reduce packaging waste through innovations in packaging design and logistics, and manage our packaging waste in the most environmentally sustainable way.

Scotland's waste policy is set out in its innovative Zero Waste Plan, published in June 2010. The Plan highlights Scotland's ambition to: Treat waste as a resource that should not be discarded carelessly; Tackle all waste, not just municipal waste and achieve total recycling targets of 70% by 2025, with no more than 5% of all waste going to landfill.

The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020 provides the policy basis for waste management in Northern Ireland. It contains actions and targets designed to move away from simply managing the waste produced towards recognition of this waste as a valuable resource.

¹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

The Regulations on packaging have played a valuable role in creating markets and driving behavior change and will help the UK in achieving the aims set out above. This consultation sets out three options for recycling targets on packaging producers from 2013 to 2017.

UK recovery and recycling targets.

The UK's Producer Responsibility (Packaging Waste) Regulations require producers of packaging to ensure that a proportion of the packaging they handle is recovered and recycled. The proportion they must ensure is recovered and recycled depends on a) the amount of packaging they have handled, b) the activity they have carried out on that packaging e.g. retailing, pack filling etc and c) the UK business targets.

This consultation sets options regarding the level at which UK business targets should be set for the period 2013-2017. The options are:

Option 1 – keep all packaging recycling and recovery targets to the minimum required to meet EU targets until 2017

Option 2 – Higher recycling targets for aluminium and plastic (respectively 1% and 2% increase/yr from 2013, through

- a) Statutory targets
- b) Statutory targets to EU minimum plus voluntary responsibility deals

Option 3- Higher recycling targets for aluminium, plastic and steel with glass recycling split by end use (respectively 3%/yr, 5%/yr, 1%/yr increase and 1% change/yr from 2013) through

- a) Statutory targets
- b) Statutory targets to EU minimum plus voluntary responsibility deals
- c) Statutory targets to EU minimum plus introduction of deposit return system

Option 3a is the Government's preferred option and aligns with the ambitions of the Waste Review. Increasing the amount of packaging which is recycled will benefit consumers, businesses and the environment. Recycling reduces the need to extract virgin raw materials, which helps prevent natural resource depletion. Also most recycling processes are less energy intensive than the manufacture of virgin materials, which saves both money to businesses and greenhouse gas emissions.

Glass

The consultation also proposes to split glass recycling targets based on the end use of the recovered material with a 1% change/year from 2013. This is because recycling glass back into re-melt applications e.g. back into bottles, has a significantly higher carbon saving than recycling the material into non-remelt applications e.g. road aggregates. The proposal in the consultation is to limit the amount of glass which can be recycled into aggregates and be counted toward the achievement of the UK targets at its 2008 level – approximately 565,000 tonnes. This change would ensure that the increased amount of material recycled by any new higher targets will achieve the best environmental outcome. The consultation document also asks for views on any practical issues or consequences of splitting the glass target in this way.

Consultation process

This consultation paper is presented by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Welsh Government. It can be found on the website: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/

We are seeking your views on proposed packaging recycling and recovery targets and the accompanying impact assessment.

The consultation will start on 12 December 2011 and run for 8 weeks. Responses should be received **no later than Friday 10th February 2012**. The consultation is reduced to 8 weeks in order to make a decision by Budget 2012. If you wish to discuss the options in the consultation document and IA, please contact the relevant administration –details below.

All responses should be sent by email to packaging@defra.gsi.gov.uk, or by post to Producer Responsibility Unit, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Zone 6/D, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London.

Respondents in Scotland should also send their response to:

Tim Chant
Zero Waste Delivery Team
Environmental Quality Division
Scottish Government
1-H(N) Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Email: Timothy.chant@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Respondents in Wales should also send their response to:

Mrs Anna Madeley
Waste Regulation Policy branch
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: waste@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Respondents in Northern Ireland should also send their response to:

Janis Purdy
Environmental Policy Division
DoENI
6th Floor, Goodwood House
44-58 May Street
BELFAST
BT1 4NN

Email: janis.purdy@doeni.gsi.gov.uk

Please make sure that any email responses are clearly marked '**Packaging Targets Consultation Responses**'.

In your response, please explain who you are and, where relevant, whom you represent and give your name and appropriate contact details.

If you wish to receive a hard copy of the consultation document and Impact Assessment, please contact the relevant Administration.

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive may be made publicly available through the Defra Information Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses.

If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request. You should also be aware that there are circumstances in which Defra will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

Enquiries and Complaints

The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or email requests (tel: 020 7238 6575, email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Where possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours' notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

If you have any queries about this consultation you should contact Ian Atkinson by email ian.atkinson@defra.gsi.gov.uk or telephone on 020 7238 4345.

Complaints relating to this consultation should be sent to Marjorie Addo, Defra's Consultation Co-ordinator, Area 7C Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

Government consultation guidelines can be found at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Ian Atkinson
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

In this consultation document the expression 'government' means, collectively, the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive.