

DRS wrangle is latest in a “raid on democracy”

The Scottish Greens say that all MSPs who believe in devolution must stand up for Scotland’s environment and the work of The Scottish Parliament as never before following the Tory UK Government’s “raid on our democracy”.

Mark Ruskell MSP said the spotlight would fall on every politician in Holyrood in days and weeks to come as the very question of devolved powers are put to the test over Scotland’s Deposit Return Scheme. A debate on devolution is already due to take place on Tuesday.

Speaking after Minister Lorna Slater appeared on BBC Scotland’s Sunday Show taking the Tories to task over their 11th hour U-turn, he said: “Lorna Slater is absolutely correct when she says the Tory UK Government has ridden roughshod over devolution.

“The decision being imposed by Westminster to instruct our elected parliament to drop a law voted for by its own members is nothing less than a raid on democracy, and a chilling turn of events that should concern every single person in Scotland.

“The whole point of devolution is that it allows our parliament’s to make different choices and rightly allows the Scottish Parliament to lead on the issues that affect people in Scotland every day.

“Our Parliament is at its best when it is leading the way and doing things differently. That’s why we abolished tuition fees, introduced the first public smoking ban and delivered the Scottish Child Payment and free bus travel for everyone under 22.

“The Deposit Return Scheme is part of that same tradition of the Scottish Parliament working and delivering for Scotland and our environment. The environmental case for glass to be in Scotland’s Deposit Return Scheme is absolutely clear and so is the democratic one.

“MSPs must recognise it is their duty to defend the environment and democracy and speak against this outrageous behaviour from a Tory Government that seems intent on a scorched Earth approach to everything before it is finally shown the door.

“Will they defend Scottish devolution, or will they allow this UK Government to neuter our right to make laws and carry out the functions the electorate voted for us to do?

“And what of our environment? Do any of them really think a can and bottle return scheme that doesn’t include glass bottles will help heal our planet more readily, lift litter off our streets or make sure the menace of broken glass can be cured?

“This has been a spectacular reverse by the Tories’ over their own manifesto commitment on glass. Even their own MSP Maurice Golden was previously Tweeting about how vital it was for glass to be included until just recently.

“Questions now also need to be asked about why they changed their mind so soon after accepting donations from the drinks industry. While there may be nothing untowards, it certainly isn’t a good look.

“The Deposit Return Scheme may be the catalyst but there is a

far bigger power grab at play.

“The days and weeks ahead will be crucial, and that is why we need all people, parties and MSPs who care about the future of devolution to stand together and say that enough is enough.”

Scottish Labour Net Zero spokesperson, Sarah Boyack MSP, said: “This war of words between the UK and Scottish Governments does nothing for Scottish businesses and producers, consumers, or our environment.

“It is now time for both of Scotland’s Governments to work together to ensure we get a viable Deposit Return Scheme that has the confidence of producers and consumers.

“Lorna Slater must make a Statement in Parliament this week. Businesses have already made hundreds of millions of investments already. They need certainty from the Scottish Government, not dithering.”

Devolution debate

On Tuesday in The Scottish Parliament the matter of devolution and the control exerted by Westminster is already scheduled to be debated. Keith Brown the Depute Leader of the SNP is to lead a debate entitled [Protecting Devolution and The Scottish Parliament](#). This motion was lodged on 16 May, quite some time before the latest decision by the UK Government which The Scottish Government say is another attempt to stifle devolution.

Preparing for next week, SNP MSP Keith Brown said the unelected Tory government at Westminster – “which has just six MPs in Scotland” – was taking control of devolved powers such as environmental protection, food standards and a range of other areas without the consent of the Scottish Parliament or the people of Scotland.

Mr Brown said: “It could not be a more critical time for

Scottish democracy as we see explicit and repeated attacks on devolution from Westminster which Labour and the Tories are happy to help facilitate.

“The necessity of this debate should be unthinkable. But we have an out of control Tory Scottish Secretary acting like a Governor-General grabbing powers and placing himself above the democratic wishes of the people of Scotland. I will do everything I can to defend Scottish democracy from blatant Westminster attacks.

“From the unprecedented decision to invoke a Section 35 order in order to veto devolved legislation, to ongoing breaches of the Sewel Convention – the Tories are attempting to destroy devolution by any means necessary, and it is beyond shameful that Keir Starmer’s Labour party has been silently complicit on the matter.

“If Tory and Labour MSPs fail to speak up to defend devolution in my debate in Holyrood next Tuesday then they are confirming they are happy to see the Scottish Parliament undermined and for Westminster to tighten its control over Scotland. They have 4 days to decide if they will step up to protect devolution.

“The SNP will continue to stand up for Scottish democracy but ultimately it’s clear the only way to properly protect Scotland’s democracy is to become an independent country and escape Westminster control for good.”

The motion reads: