

Environmental campaigners take message on deposit return scheme to UK Government

Environmental campaigners today protested outside Queen Elizabeth House, the UK Government's headquarters in Scotland.

The campaigners brought bags of littered cans and bottles found last week by litter picking group Fife Street Champions, one of the many litter picking groups across Scotland that are campaigning for deposit return.

The significance of the numbers is that an estimated 499,068,504 drinks containers will be littered, landfilled or incinerated during the seven months that the legislation has been delayed according to data from ReLoop, an international non-profit organisation specialising in resource and waste policy.

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) have called on the UK Government to stop blocking Scotland's deposit return system and to grant an exemption to the International Market Act (IMA), legislation which means devolved powers can only be used where Westminster agrees.

This most recent delay means that almost half a billion extra bottles and cans will be littered, landfilled, or incinerated. Scotland's deposit return scheme was first announced in September 2017, and has now been delayed three times.

Most recently, the First Minister announced that Scotland's deposit return scheme would be delayed by 198 days, given Westminster's failure to grant this exemption, without which industry cannot be sure it will go ahead at all.

The Scottish system charges a 20p deposit for every single use drinks can and bottle, which is fully refunded once that can or bottle is returned to a shop or other return point. It is expected to reduce litter by roughly one third, and is scheduled to launch on 1st March 2024.

Dr. Kat Jones, Director of APRS, said: "Every day this scheme is delayed, more and more cans and bottles are littered in our towns, countryside, and waterways. We have been waiting years for this scheme to be introduced, meanwhile the environmental cost is stacking up. "We are in the midst of an environmental crisis, yet UK Ministers are treating a basic recycling system as a political football. Disrupting the Scottish deposit system will set Scotland's environment back yet again, and would mean hundreds of millions of pounds of investment will have been wasted. It also risks sabotaging Westminster's own system, which is due to start in 2025."



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A(L-R) Jo McFarlane, Barry Snedden, Sarah Doherty of APRS, Kat Jones of APRS, Calum Duncan of Marine Conservation Society and Nina Sobeka of APRS The Association for the Protection of

Rural Scotland (APRS) have formally called on the UK government to stop blocking Scotland's deposit return system and to grant an exemption to the International Market Act (IMA), legislation which means devolved powers can only be used where Westminster agrees. All images © Stewart Attwood Photography 2023.



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