

More discussion on deposit return scheme

The Scottish Government's deposit return scheme was to be the best in Europe but it is already delayed until next year, and now the UK government has said it cannot include glass due to internal market rules.

The Scottish arrangements are due to be in place before the rest of the UK, and so to ensure that there is no trade barrier in different parts of the UK, if it is subject to different rules from those introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK Government has said it must exclude glass.

On Tuesday the Circular Economy Minister Lorna Slater [made a statement to parliament](#) saying that she "had expected to be here today letting Parliament know that the UK Government had done the right thing and granted a full exclusion to the Internal Market Act for Scotland's scheme. This is because

waste and recycling is a fully devolved policy matter and this Parliament legislated for the scheme in May 2020.

“The environmental and economic benefits of the scheme have never been in question – it will reduce littering by a third and increase recycling rates of single-use drinks containers towards 90%.

“Glass accounts for a large proportion of these containers, and is one of the most common items to pollute our beaches. That’s why our scheme included glass from the beginning. It’s why almost all schemes around the world include glass.”

The political wrangling between the two governments is now the focus of everyone’s attention rather than the policy to become a greener nation.

Scottish Labour Net Zero spokesperson Sarah Boyack said “It is absurd that our recycling scheme has been reduced to yet another tiresome constitutional row between two governments with nothing else to offer.

“The Minister seems to be clueless about the future of the scheme, which she plunged into chaos long before the UK government got involved, and she failed to clarify whether the costs for consumers for cans and plastics would now be increased.

“Businesses and taxpayers alike have been left in limbo over costs and the most basic questions still haven’t been answered.

“We urgently need co-operation between our two governments to deliver a recycling scheme that works – not petty political pointscoreing.”

Alex Cole-Hamilton Liberal Democrat MSP said: “Both the Scottish and UK governments are at it. Businesses are caught in the middle and being messed about.

“The fact is that the Scottish Government made a pig’s ear of a good idea, long before it tried to use a constitutional row to muddy the waters around its own inadequacy.

“Retailers and producers could work with a scheme that is competent and which doesn’t throw up barriers, but that’s not what they had in front of them.

“Isn’t part of the problem that we have here two governments that are incapable of owning up to mistakes, for whom cooperation is a dirty word even if that is what hard-pressed businesses are crying out for?”