

# **Greens say the UK government has “ripped up” devolution settlement**

**The Scottish Greens say that the UK Government has effectively ripped up Scotland’s devolution settlement and caused untold future damage to the environment with its “outrageous attack on democracy”.**

The UK Government has replied to The Scottish Government saying that the Deposit Return Scheme which Scotland wanted to put in place as a first in the UK, can only proceed subject to certain conditions. One of these is that the scheme excludes glass. The Circular Economy Minister [has already decided](#) this means that the Scottish scheme is scuppered until other UK schemes are put in place. Lorna Slater announced a delay of two years to the scheme in parliament on Wednesday afternoon and said it will be “more limited than it need be”.

The problem is the Internal Market Act. Scotland required an exemption from the terms of that but the UK government said that glass bottles would have to be excluded from the recycling scheme to bring it into line with the rest of the UK. The Scottish scheme would have to proceed on the basis that it included plastic, aluminium and steel cans.

The company established to run the scheme, Circularity Scotland, has expressed disappointment with the announcement of a further delay.

Mark Ruskell MSP, the Green party's environment spokesperson, said: "Every person in Scotland who cares about the environment should be absolutely sickened by this outrageous turn of events and where it now leaves us.

"MSPs sitting in the Scottish Parliament passed a law that would have completely reset our relationship with litter and recycling, created hundreds of jobs and brought us in line with more than 50 other countries doing their bit to tackle climate change.

"But at the first sniff of a malt, the Tory government at Westminster put a red pen through our parliamentary Bill and left it in limbo, effectively ripping up our devolution settlement.

"What's next? If it can happen to DRS it can happen to any of our plans to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. What of our Just Transition, what about our marine areas, or grouse moors?

"Many people have been campaigning for years to get a Deposit Return Scheme who will justifiably be incredibly angry and worried at this delay caused by the utter contempt shown towards this parliament by the Tory government.

"I too am angry at the way the UK Government has trampled all over Scotland's plans to tackle litter and improve recycling.

"The only small crumb of comfort from this is that we have a Green Minister who is resolute on her determination to deliver a deposit return scheme, having worked tirelessly to deliver something even the Tories now admit was always viable.

"The Scottish Greens remain committed to DRS and a whole range of protections to tackle the climate, nature and biodiversity crisis. We are relieved the Scottish Government has acted in those interests with this selfless decision making.

“However not only is the protection of our environment at stake, but the whole question of who runs Scotland is under the spotlight too. For people and for planet, we have to defend our environment and our democracy.

“This cannot be the end of the road for the work of the Scottish Parliament. We must get rid of this Tory government and it is clear now more than ever, that the only route left for that is by campaigning for independence.”

## **Food and Drink Federation**

A spokesperson from the Food and Drink Federation said: “We welcome today’s decision by the Scottish Government to delay the Deposit Return Scheme and align to the UK scheme, expected to be launched in October 2025. Our members fully support the implementation of DRS and have made significant investments to support the launch of the Scottish scheme, and we will now need to assess the implications of the delay.

“Our businesses are working to stretching sustainability targets and take their responsibility to our natural environment very seriously, which is why we want to see a circular economy established rapidly, designed with industry and consumers at their heart. We hope governments across the UK will now take the time provided by this delay to go back to the drawing board on their waste reform proposals, to ensure that everything including consistent collections, DRS and EPR can be delivered successfully, learning the lessons from the collapse of the DRS scheme in Scotland.”

Scottish Conservative MSP Maurice Golden MSP said: “Let’s be clear, Lorna Slater’s scheme had already failed long before any intervention from the UK Government.

“It’s important something is salvaged from the wreckage of a disastrous scheme, and this belated clarity offers businesses what they want: a scheme that works across the UK.

“We could have saved a great deal of time and energy if the SNP and Greens had listened to those businesses in the first place.

“Just days ago, Lorna Slater and Humza Yousaf were indulging in reckless scaremongering – threatening to scrap the scheme if glass wasn’t included. They tried the old nationalist trick of picking a fight with the UK Government.

“But it backfired. They were rumbled misrepresenting one of Scotland’s leading drinks producers. Then, Circularity Scotland and the logistics partner, Biffa, both confirmed the scheme can go ahead without glass.

“Yet Humza Yousaf had claimed: ‘The removal of glass fundamentally threatens the viability of Scotland’s DRS’.

“The First Minister had either been using glass as an excuse to ditch the scheme, or he didn’t know what he was talking about. Lorna Slater refused to say which it was – but that’s no surprise, as she’s been unable to answer simple questions on this shambles from day one.”

Scottish Labour Net Zero spokesperson Sarah Boyack said “This is a huge blow to our recycling aims and to businesses who have spent years of their time and millions of pounds preparing for an ever-shifting deadline.

“The Tories have provided a convenient excuse to delay, but this scheme has been in chaos for months because of the SNP-Green government’s incompetence.

“It is utterly absurd that our two governments are too dysfunctional to deliver a working recycling scheme without it descending into yet another constitutional row.

“Lorna Slater has lost the confidence of businesses and proven herself to be a liability – she must now have her DRS responsibilities removed.

“Both governments need to get round the table and come up with a way forward so we can boost Scotland’s recycling rates and protect our planet without further delay.”



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