



23rd February 2016

Mary Creagh MP
Chair of Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

BY E-MAIL

Dear Mary

Defra Departmental Plan and UK Government position on EU Circular Economy Package

Firstly, may I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the EAC and welcome you to the role. We appreciated the time you spent with us when you were Defra Shadow Secretary of State during the last Parliament and the interest you showed in materials security, the circular economy and the wider resources sector. We look forward to you continuing this interest in the new role.

I am writing not just to welcome you, but because we wish to draw to your attention to two serious and related matters of concern to the resources industry that could benefit from your Committee's attention:

- The recent publication by Defra of their **Departmental Plan** has been met with dismay by our industries as it makes no reference whatsoever to the Department's role in delivering household recycling targets for England or even any reference to the expected revisions to waste legislation and new proposals from the Commission under its Circular Economy Package. We see the lack of reference to our industry as a major omission and it again raises serious concerns about the ambition for and interest of the Department in our industry. The only reference to our sector in the Plan is to work on waste crime which we have warmly welcomed - but this alone is insufficient recognition of the essential role of our industry, the legislation and targets which the Department is managing and the future proposals under the Circular Economy Package.
- Linked to this is a major concern in the industry about the lack of transparency and clarity of the UK Government's negotiating positions on the draft waste legislation proposals in the **Circular Economy Package**. Although Defra have run a couple of stakeholder consultation events, there has been very little information forthcoming from Ministers or officials about their positions on various key aspects of the Package and new recycling targets. We are led to understand by colleagues in the European Commission that the UK Government is taking negative positions on many of the proposals and yet none of this has been properly shared or communicated with stakeholders at home. The reality is that, if this is true, then on many aspects of the Commission's proposals it is quite possible that UK Government is not at all speaking for significant elements of the UK industry who see

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much merit in the more ambitious proposals coming from the Commission, even though detail needs to be worked upon. The same may be said of the probable attitude of the Scottish and Welsh Governments to the Commission's proposals and I would be surprised if there wasn't some disquiet from those quarters about the UK Government's approach.

My appeal to you is to ask that you use your good offices to call in Defra Ministers and officials for a full scrutiny of the rationale behind their new Departmental Plan and their negotiating positions on the Circular Economy Package.

I believe that scrutiny of these matters is urgently needed and would be timely in the context of the debate we are now engaged in as a nation about our future relationship with the European Union.

I have taken the unusual step of releasing this request publicly and trust you will understand why, as the issues are of important public interest in our industry and we look to you for a chance to place a spotlight on these matters at an important moment for our industry. Your recent comments of concern about too much deregulation in the waste industry chime with our own concerns. We would like to see a more open debate from the UK Government and acknowledgement that good regulation aids market making, investment and long term sustainability and we hope you will be able to bring this debate to the fore by scrutinising the matters I have raised.

I look forward to hearing from you and remain at your disposal should that be useful.

Yours Sincerely

Ray Georgeson

Ray Georgeson MBE
Chief Executive