



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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To: **All MPs & Peers**

23rd July 2019

Dear Colleague,

Environment Bill

I am pleased to announce that we have today published a series of documents which set out more detail on measures for the government's flagship Environment Bill. The Environment Bill Summer Policy Statement sets out our commitment to legislate for longterm environmental governance and accountability, air quality, nature recovery, resource and waste measures, and water management.

We published the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill in December 2018, setting out draft proposals for green governance after we leave the EU. In April, we gratefully received the pre-legislative scrutiny reports from two Parliamentary Select Committees outlining their recommendations. We are considering how to respond to these recommendations, and our response will be published alongside the introduction of the Bill early in the second Session.

Air quality

The Environment Bill is the centrepiece of our answer to urgent environmental need and a landmark commitment to protecting and improving the environment for future generations. The Bill will contain key measures from the Clean Air Strategy as well as powers for the government to recall vehicles that do not meet legal emission standards. These changes will enable us to take the bold action we need to protect our health, and that of future generations. We have also today published a report into the feasibility of achieving World Health Organization (WHO) levels of PM_{2.5} – the most damaging air pollutant – of 10 µg/m³ annual mean concentration across the UK. Overall, on the basis of scientific modelling which has not yet considered economic viability, we believe that, whilst challenging, it would be technically feasible to meet the WHO guideline level for PM_{2.5} in the UK.

Water, nature and resources and waste

Today we have also published six Government responses to consultations on biodiversity net gain, conservation covenants, long-term planning of water resources and drainage, deposit return scheme, recycling and extended producer responsibility.

Through the Bill, we will introduce a mandatory approach to biodiversity net gain. This will require developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced, with a 10% increase in habitat value for wildlife compared with the pre-development baseline. We will also



legislate for a new framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies in the Environment Bill. These spatial strategies will help to map out important habitats and opportunities for the local environment to be improved, linking communities' knowledge and priorities with national environmental objectives. The Bill will also give communities a greater say in the protection of local trees by introducing a duty on local authorities to consult with local communities when a street tree is to be felled. We also intend to legislate for conservation covenants, a voluntary agreement between a landowner and others, for example a conservation charity. This will help secure long term environmental benefits.

The Bill will also introduce a series of measures that will fundamentally change the way government, businesses and individuals produce and consume products. We will ensure those who place packaging on the market take more responsibility for the costs any waste of that packaging imposes; according to the 'polluter pays' principle. We are also seeking powers to enable government to set resource efficient product requirements and labelling requirements to drive a shift in the market towards durable, repairable and recyclable products. On recycling, we will legislate for a consistent set of recyclable materials to be collected from all households and businesses in England, and clearer labelling on packaging so consumers know what they can recycle. We will also take powers to introduce deposit return schemes.

We are committed to improving the long-term planning of water resources and drainage. The Bill will set out powers to direct water companies to work together on how they will meet current and future demand for water this will ensure we are better able to maintain supplies, even during periods of drought. We will support regulators in ensuring that customers and the environment are protected. We will legislate to strengthen Ofwat's powers to update water companies' licences. We will also modernise and strengthen water regulation, and ensure that the aquatic environment is protected from harmful chemicals.

Next steps

The Environment Bill will be introduced in the second Parliamentary Session. Ahead of introduction, I will be holding a series of drop-in sessions on the Bill with colleagues. If you would like to attend one of these sessions please contact secretary.state@defra.gov.uk.

With every good wish,

Michael Gove

