



The Environment Bill – 30TH January 2020

The Key Points for our Industry Summarised

Background

The Environment Bill was introduced into parliament on 15th October 2019. It was re-introduced to parliament following a general election on 30th January 2020. The Environment Bill 2020 sets out how the UK Government plans to protect and improve the natural environment in the UK.

The Environment Bill will help deliver the government's manifesto commitment. It is part of the wider government response to the **clear and scientific case, and growing public demand, for a step-change in environmental protection and recovery.**

Environmental Governance

The UK Government has laid legislation to **reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050**, the first country to do so.

The plan is to transform environmental governance by creating a new system which is tailored specifically to a UK context. It takes the essential steps needed to strengthen environmental oversight and improve on the way things have been done in the past. **The new system will be clear and accessible, providing certainty to businesses and citizens.**

The UK Government will also review significant developments in the environmental protection legislation of other countries and prepare a report for Parliament every two years. **This will ensure they keep abreast of international developments in driving forward their environmental protection legislation.**

In order to strengthen environmental accountability, the Environment Bill will establish a new public body – **the Office for Environmental Protection – as an independent, domestic watchdog.** Through its scrutiny and advice functions, the new body will monitor progress in improving the natural environment in accordance with the government's domestic environmental improvement plans and targets. It will be able to provide government with written advice on any proposed changes to environmental law.

Resource & Waste Management

The resources and waste measures in the Bill will help **move our economy away from the 'take, make, use, throw' system to a more circular economic model.** The ambition is to keep resources in use for longer and ensure that we extract the maximum value we can from them.

The Environment Bill helps consumers to make purchasing decisions that support the market for more sustainable products. It contains powers to introduce clear product labelling, which will enable consumers to identify products that are **more durable, repairable and recyclable and will inform them on how to dispose of used products.**

New government powers to set resource-efficiency standards for products **will help drive a shift in the market towards products that can be more easily recycled, as well as products that last longer and which can be re-used and repaired more easily.**

Extended producer responsibility schemes seek to make producers responsible for the full net costs of managing their products at end of life. The powers provide for modulated fees that incentivise **producers to design their products with re-use and recycling in mind, as those that make their products easier to recycle will pay less.**

To continue reducing plastic pollution across the country, the Environment Bill will enable the **creation of new charges for other single-use plastic items, similar to the carrier bag charge, which will incentivise a shift towards the use of more reusable items.** The UK Government are also taking powers to **establish deposit return schemes that further incentivise consumers to reduce litter and recycle more.**

The Bill contains powers which will allow government to **stop the export of waste, including polluting plastic waste, to developing countries.** The UK Government will consult with industry, NGOs and local authorities on any specific restrictions or prohibitions. The Bill also includes measures that will allow us **to introduce producer responsibility obligations on waste prevention and redistribution.**

To support citizens' efforts to recycle more, the Environment Bill stipulates a consistent set of materials that must be collected from all households and businesses, including food waste. This will help make services more consistent across the country. The Bill also sets out how government will mandate weekly collections of food waste for every household, subject to consultation.

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