



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

2nd December 2022

Jean Contrevent

RE: PLASTIC REDUCTION TARGETS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of plastic reduction targets. I have read your comments with interest.

The *Resources and Waste Strategy for England* sets out the Government's plans to reduce, reuse, and recycle more plastic and Ministers have committed to work towards all plastic packaging on the market being recyclable or reusable by 2025.

Significant progress has already been made to address plastic pollution, including a ban on microbeads and restricting the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds. The use of single-use carrier bags in supermarkets has reduced by over 97 percent.

The Government is considering proposals to ban single-use plastic plates, cutlery, and balloon sticks, expanded and extruded polystyrene food and beverage containers, as well as other plastic items, including wet wipes and other single-use cups.

The *Environment Act* requires the Government to set at least one long-term target in the areas of resource efficiency and waste reduction. The Government recently consulted on its target to reduce residual waste. Over 180,000 submissions were received. As these responses must be analysed and carefully considered, I am aware that it was not possible to publish these targets by the 31st October, as required by the Act. I am assured that DEFRA is working to lay draft statutory instruments as soon as practicable and I look forward to reading the Government's response in due course.

I understand that setting individual, material-specific legally binding targets, such as a plastics waste reduction target, could risk shifting the environmental impact to other material types and could even lead to increases in residual waste owing to switches to heavier materials. Ministers aim to take a holistic approach to all materials and avoid unintended substitution effects. As well as being a global environmental waste issue, plastics are strong, durable, and versatile materials, bringing environmental and economic benefits. Setting targets that encourage reductions in our consumption of materials more broadly, not only plastics, will help to ensure the best environmental outcome.

The export of plastic waste is subject to strict controls in legislation. Businesses must ensure that the waste they ship is managed in an environmentally sound manner throughout its shipment and during its recycling. Individuals and businesses found to be exporting waste in contravention of the legislation can face a two-year jail term and an unlimited fine.



Finally, the Government wants to deal with more of our waste at home and I understand Ministers committed to banning the export of plastic waste to countries which are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**