

P-06-1222: Ban disposable barbecues from our National Parks, National Nature Reserves and Welsh beaches!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 10 Ionawr 2022
Petitions Committee | 10 January 2022

Reference: SR21/1251-1

Petition Number: P-06-1222

Petition title: Ban disposable barbecues from our National Parks, National Nature Reserves and Welsh beaches!

Text of petition: Each year supermarkets and online stores promote the sale of thousands of cheap disposable barbecues which are then often used in a careless and irresponsible way leading to the destruction of important delicate wildlife habitats.

Only a total ban on these products will protect our precious Welsh wildlife.

We now realise the importance of our uplands and forests in storing carbon and protecting us from climate change. We also need to prevent marine pollution from damaging our Welsh seas.

Enough is enough..... it's time to ban disposable bbq's from our Welsh beaches, National Parks and Nature Reserves. With the ecological emergency getting worse we cannot afford to ignore this issue.

These fires take long periods of time to bring under control and to extinguish completely, as with moor fires once a part of the fire has been extinguished the fire can travel under ground and reignite in a new location. They bring devastating effects to the local area, destroy wildlife, kill huge areas of natural beauty and not to mention our lives at risk, all of which is completely unnecessary and avoidable.



Many of our most beautiful beaches are trashed each summer with simmering bbq's literally inches below the sand surface, presenting a threat to both wildlife and vulnerable beach users...its time we protected our natural world instead of watching it burn!

1. Background

Wildfires can occur when unextinguished disposable barbecues are disposed of improperly or abandoned. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) highlights that disposable barbecues are a 'common cause of hard to control wildfires in Wales'. Disposable barbecues were also implicated in a wildfire that damaged 190 hectares of land in England in 2020.

Advocates of banning disposable barbecues highlight that their portable design, a tin foil tray filled with charcoal covered by a wire mesh, make them easy to carry to remote areas where they can cause fires.

Others argue that barbecues are a "great way for people to enjoy the Welsh outdoors".

A petition submitted to the UK Parliament, urging the UK Government to ban disposable barbecues, noted that they are easy to carry prior to use but:

almost impossible to carry away for many hours after use whilst they remain hot, meaning they are often left as litter with devastating consequences

In response to the UK Parliament petition, Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rebecca Pow, stated:

In terms of legal powers, current byelaw legislation allows for local authorities to restrict and enforce the use of disposable barbecues in parks and public spaces.

In summer 2021, supermarket chain, Co-op announced it would no longer sell disposable barbecues in shops near UK National Parks to 'help prevent devastating wildfires'.

A Disposable Barbecues Bill has been introduced into the UK Parliament. Its first reading was on 17 November 2021 and second reading is expected on 14 January 2022. The Bill would prohibit the use of disposable barbecues on open moorland; and give local authorities the power to prohibit the sale of disposable barbecues in their area. The Bill is not publicly available yet and so Senedd Research is unclear on its detail or extent.

The UK Internal Market Act 2020

The UK Internal Market Act 2020 established new rules for the regulation of goods across the UK. The Act established the principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination, and enshrined them in UK law as Market Access Principles.

Under the mutual recognition principle, if a good complies with the rules relating to its sale in the part of the UK in which it was produced or imported to, then it can be sold in any other part of the UK without having to meet the standards in those other parts, even if they are different.

Under the non-discrimination principle, any rules regulating how goods must be sold in one part of the UK which discriminate directly or indirectly against providers from other parts of the UK do not generally apply.

Banning the sale of barbecues may come within the scope of the Market Access Principles in the *Internal Market Act 2020*. This means that the effect and enforceability of the petition's proposal may be impacted in practice.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has previously stated (September 2020) that it has no powers to regulate the use of disposable barbeques.

The Climate Change Minister's letter on this petition states:

We have worked closely with the National Park Authorities on messaging since Covid restrictions began, particularly around responsible recreation.

This included:

Targeted messages, around the risks of disposable barbecues and only lighting fires in designated places.

Regarding the issue of fire damage caused in Welsh National Parks, National Nature Reserves and Welsh Beaches, the Minister stated:

The great majority of fires in grassland and forested areas are started deliberately and maliciously, not by barbecues. We have reduced the number of such fires significantly in recent years through a programme of collaboration between the Fire Service, the Police, Natural Resources Wales and others to deter people from deliberate fire-setting and to respond swiftly to fires that do occur.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In September 2021, Janet Finch-Saunders MS, wrote to supermarkets and other retailers urging them not to stock disposable barbecues next summer.

In response, Sara Jones, head of the Welsh Retail Consortium, said disposable barbecues need to be 'used responsibly' and disposed of 'correctly'.

In September 2020, Llyr Gruffydd MS, submitted a written question to the Welsh Government:

What considerations is the Welsh Government giving to regulating the use of disposable barbecues, specifically given the risk they pose to public land and public safety?

In response, the (then) Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government noted:

The Welsh Government is committed through its Clean Air Plan for Wales to look at the practicalities, advantages and challenges of regulating outdoor appliances and fuels, which would include disposable barbecues.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.