

Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1357  
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02347/23

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

12 September 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 15 August regarding a petition from Friends of the Earth calling on a Microplastics Action Plan for Wales.

I share Friends of the Earth Cymru's concerns over microplastics. I believe it is imperative that societal use of plastics, especially single-use plastic, is reduced to protect the environment, biodiversity and human health.

Microplastics originate from a range of different sources, including industrial and domestic activities. Consequently, we have several existing strategies which are committed to taking a focussed and evidence-based approach to tackling microplastics. However, I acknowledge this is a complex and evolving area of science where we continue to undertake research in this area and where appropriate take mitigating action.

The Welsh Government has a long history of action to reduce the flow of plastic into the environment. I am proud of the legislation we have introduced to address the problem. This includes charges on single-use carrier bags, banning microbeads in wash-off personal care products and most recently, the bans on commonly littered single-use plastic products which will shortly come into force under The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.

The Act provides Welsh Ministers with powers to introduce further bans if needed. I can confirm we are already prioritising evidence gathering for other problematic products that contribute to microplastic pollution such as wet wipes. When used wipes are flushed, they can block drains, contribute to flooding and add microplastic fibres to our water supply. By stopping the supply of unnecessary plastics at the source, we will slow down the leakage of microplastics into our environment. We are currently working with the UK Government and Devolved Governments on potential regulatory action in this area.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We are also working to introduce an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging, which will introduce a sliding scale of fees for producers who place packaging on the market. This will help reduce the volume of packaging and make it easier to recycle. We are also working on a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers. Both initiatives also aim to reduce the littering of packaging, including packaging made of plastic.

We have an extensive household waste collection system where as much as possible is recycled and are extending similar requirements to businesses during 2024.

We have also worked across governments to develop a British Standard to prevent the loss of plastic pellets to the environment during transport and production phases of plastic. We have collaborated on the development of a microplastics indicator for our seas.

I believe the range of actions we are taking, and our existing strategies illustrate the Welsh Government is committed to taking a focussed and evidence-based approach to the plastic and microplastic problem.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AS/MS**  
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