

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Jamie Peters
Interim Director of Campaigning Impact
Friends of the Earth
The Printworks
139 Clapham Road
London
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22nd January 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Setting targets in the Environment Bill for the reduction of plastic pollution.

Public concern over the risks and harms of plastic pollution remains enormous. The ‘Blue Planet effect’ has been sustained by a steady flow of scientific studies showing plastic pollution in oceans, soils, drinking water, the air we breathe and the food we eat.

The government has responded with some positive initiatives including product bans, levies and a tax on virgin plastic to drive greater recycling. Overall, though, the approach has been piecemeal. The vast majority of plastic pollution sources, ranging from single-use packaging, vehicle tyre dust, microfibres from synthetic clothing, spillage of pre-production plastic pellets (‘nurdles’) and more, remain unaddressed. We would like to encourage you to go further.

The Coronavirus pandemic has vividly illustrated both the essential role that plastic plays in healthcare and the scale of polluting waste created by a wholesale switch back to single-use and throw-away packaging.

Just as with climate change and carbon pollution, we need an overarching approach that achieves long-term and interim targets to reduce plastic pollution. Such an approach would cover the full range of plastic ‘emissions’ to the environment, focussing on the worst emitters whilst safeguarding uses of plastic that are essential to health, well-being and sustainability.

At the same time, we must avoid addressing plastic pollution in isolation; doing so risks unintended harmful consequences elsewhere. Simply switching from single-use and throw-away plastic to alternative single-use and throw-away materials will create – and is already creating – vast new waste streams and associated pollution risks.

Addressing the systemic problem of plastic pollution is a complex challenge but rising to that challenge will have far-reaching benefits. The strength of public, political and corporate concern over plastic pollution is a historic opportunity to shift away from single-use and throw-away business models in favour of an economy emphatically focused on waste reduction and reuse.

The Environment Bill provides the UK government with the chance to seize that opportunity. In so doing we can show global leadership and inspire similar changes across the world.

We have come together as a coalition of the concerned to **ask for plastic pollution reduction targets to be set in the Environment Bill**, in order to reduce the harm that this is causing to wildlife, human health and the environment.

Yours sincerely,



Together with cross-sector support from 39 organisations and individuals:

Businesses

Abel & Cole
Alex Monroe
Ecotricity
Forest Green Rovers FC
Iceland
Keep Cup
Neal's Yard Remedies
Pukka Herbs
Toast Ale

Faith

Muslim Council of Britain
Revd Gavin Calver, CEO of Evangelical Alliance
Revd John Coles, Chair of Trustees for New Wine
Revd Kate Wharton, Assistant National Leader of New Wine
Revd Paul Harcourt, National Leader of New Wine
Revd Preb Mark Melliush, Assistant National Leader of New Wine
Rt Revd Dr John Inge, Lord Bishop of Worcester
Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson QHC, Bishop of Penrith
Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox, Bishop of Sheffield
Rt Revd Mark Tanner, Bishop of Chester
Rt Revd Paul Butler, Lord Bishop of Durham
Rt Revd Ric Thorpe, Bishop of Islington
Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge

MPs

Alistair Carmichael MP, sponsor of the [Plastic Pollution Bill](#)
Ben Lake MP, co-sponsor of the Plastic Pollution Bill
Caroline Lucas MP, co-sponsor of the Plastic Pollution Bill
Geraint Davies MP, co-sponsor of the Plastic Pollution Bill

Academic

Brendan Godley, Chair in Conservation Science, Centre for Ecology and Conservation (CEC) at the University of Exeter
Plastic Research Centre of Wales (PCR Wales) at Bangor University

NGOs

British Canoeing
Clean Planet Today
CPRE The Countryside Charity
Fauna & Flora International
Keep Scotland Beautiful
Keep Wales Tidy
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust
United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)

Student

National Union of Students (NUS)
Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK)

CC: The Rt Hon George Eustice MP Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
Rebecca Pow MP DEFRA Minister for the Natural Environment;
The Rt Hon Lord Zac Goldsmith Minister for Pacific and the Environment.