



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Mary Creagh CBE MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Nature

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: ps.mary.creagh@defra.gov.uk

Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Alistair,

Thank you for the EFRA Committee's questions on plastic waste exports at the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee meeting on 9 September 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on my colleague Minister Hardy's commitment to update the committee on the government's position on plastic waste exports.

In 2021, the UK implemented changes agreed under the Basel Convention to the classification of plastic waste destined for export. Now, only clean, sorted plastic waste made up of specific polymer types can be exported under Green List Waste controls. All other exports of plastic waste are subject to prior informed consent. We recognise, however, that further action is needed so that plastic waste is only exported to countries with sufficient infrastructure and regulatory structures, to ensure that the waste is treated appropriately.

The government is currently reviewing the role of exports in dealing with the UK's plastic waste, with a view to ensuring a level playing field for domestic recyclers. This includes looking closely at the standards applied by the main importers of UK plastic waste, in countries which are both members and non-members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. This will be guided by thorough analysis to ensure that plastic waste is managed in an environmentally sound manner.

We are also considering how Green List Waste exports, including plastic, can be effectively tracked as part of our ongoing work to introduce a Digital Waste Tracking system in the UK next year. Meanwhile, the UK and its competent authorities will continue working with its partners overseas to ensure proper management of the waste we export.

Yours sincerely,

MARY CREAGH CBE MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Nature