

From: Emma Norrington [emman72@hotmail.com]

Sent: 26 November 2013 13:36

To: Gruff Edwards

Subject: plastic bags

This information below came round on the Wildlife Trust intranet - thought it would be of interest to you in particular ...

Launch of new inquiry into Plastic bags

22 November 2013

The Environmental Audit Committee is today launching an inquiry on the sustainability of measures to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags.

In September 2013, the Government announced that it would introduce in England a levy of 5p on single-use plastic carrier bags in 2015. Small retailers with fewer than 250 employees will be exempt from the charge. The Government has also suggested that it may incentivise the use of biodegradable plastic bags, which might be exempt from the levy. A 5p charge is already levied in Northern Ireland and Wales, and a similar charge will be introduced in Scotland in October 2014.

The European Commission has tabled proposals for member states to reduce their use of 'lightweight plastic bags', by introducing measures including taxes and levies, national reduction targets or an outright ban (a change to the existing packaging directive would be needed to allow a ban). If accepted, member states would have two years to implement the proposals.

The Committee intends to examine:

- The environmental impacts of the proposed 5p charge in England, including:
 - o The likely change in the number of bags discarded and any benefits for biodiversity and the environment;
 - o the likely change in the volume of plastic film produced, and the impact of a reduced demand for the oil production by-product used to make bags;

o the impact on the use of biodegradable bags and the impact on plastics recycling;

o [others?]

- Any wider environmental or sustainability implications of a possible increased use of natural-fibre 'bags for life'.

- The relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed levy rather than a possible complete ban on lightweight plastic bags.

- The rationale for excluding particular types of retailer from the levy scheme.

- The lessons to be learnt from other countries' experiences in this area.

- Any social or economic impacts of the proposed bag levy, for example on affordability for particular households or businesses.

- Any hygiene impacts or wider health impacts.

The Committee will take oral evidence on 18 December 2013 (details will be announced later), and is inviting written evidence on these issues by Monday 9 December 2013, although later submissions may also be accepted.

Submitting written evidence

As part of a scheme to encourage paperless working and maximise efficiency, the Committee is piloting a new web portal for the online submission of written evidence. Written submissions for this inquiry should therefore be submitted online.

The personal information you supply will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 for the purposes of attributing the evidence you submit and contacting you as necessary in connection with its processing. The Clerk of the House of Commons is the data controller for the purposes of the Act. We may also ask you to comment on the process

of submitting evidence via the web portal so that we can look to make improvements. If you have any queries or concerns about the collection and use of this information or do not wish your details to be used for the purpose of collecting feedback, please advise the Committee providing your full name, address, and if relevant your organisation.

Each submission should:

1. be in Word format with as little use of colour or logos as possible
2. have numbered paragraphs
3. include a declaration of any interests.

Please note that

- Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission, but may be referred to within a proposed memorandum, in which case a hard copy of the published work should be included.

- Memoranda submitted must be kept confidential until published by the Committee, unless publication by the person or organisation submitting it is specifically authorised.

- Once submitted, evidence is the property of the Committee. The Committee normally, though not always, chooses to make public the written evidence it receives, by publishing it on the internet (where it will be searchable), by printing it or by making it available through the Parliamentary Archives. If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure. The Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.

- Select Committees are unable to investigate individual cases.

Guidance on submitting evidence to Select Committees

Details are on the Committee's website:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-sele...>