



**Friends of
the Earth
Scotland**

To: Zero Waste Scotland

17th June 2015

Submission on Deposit and Return Systems

Experience around the world shows that deposit and return systems reduce litter, boost recycling rates, save energy and reduce unnecessary wastage of valuable resources. They also help to develop better attitudes to resources and waste among the public, helping the move to a Circular Economy. The carrier bag charge in Scotland has been very successful, bringing about a reduction in plastic bag use by 80% in its first 6 months and changing people's shopping habits permanently.¹ This despite the major retailers initial protestations that it could not be made to work.

As the recent report on the climate impact of a Circular Economy showed there are huge savings in carbon emission to be made from managing resources better.² Up to 11 million tonnes of carbon dioxide could be saved every year – equivalent to over 20% of all of Scotland's current climate emissions.

Friends of the Earth welcomed the deposit and return system feasibility study carried out for Zero Waste Scotland.³ This comprehensive report showed that there are no major legal or technical barriers to creating a Scottish scheme of deposits on bottles and cans, and that there would be positive economic benefits. The report also included important conclusions about protecting smaller shops while also incentivising them to take part.

Our sister organisation in Spain has been involved in the very successful pilot of deposit and return in Catalonia, where a 91% return rate was achieved by the end of a 3-month pilot in the town of Cadaqués in 2013.⁴

Examples from the US and Australia demonstrate how state-wide deposit and return systems can reduce drinks packaging litter by a factor of 3 or 4.

As a recent opinion survey on behalf of the Association for the Protection of Rural

1 <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/carrier-bag-charge-deemed-a-success-six-months-on.122872391>

2 <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/CarbonImpactsOfTheCircularEconomy>

3 <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/DepositReturnSystems>

4 <http://www.eupackaginglaw.com/packaging-and-recycling/spain-catalonia-eyes-deposit-system-109134.htm>

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Scotland showed, there is broad public support for the introduction of a deposit and return system. The poll found that 79% of the Scottish public support a scheme with only 8.5% opposing it.

Friends of the Earth Scotland fully supports the introduction of a deposit and return system for packaging in Scotland. Such a scheme would be popular with shoppers, benefit retailers, create local employment, reduce Scotland's carbon emissions, make better use of material resources and help Scotland move towards a Circular Economy.

Friends of the Earth Scotland is Scotland's leading environmental campaigning organisation and part of the largest grassroots environmental network in the world, uniting over 2 million supporters, 75 national member groups, and 5,000 local activist groups. www.foe-scotland.org.uk