



**Surfers Against Sewage**  
Unit 2, Wheal Kitty Workshops  
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## **Surfers Against Sewage response to Waste Scotland's Container Deposit Consultation**

Surfers Against Sewage strongly supports the introduction of a container deposit scheme in Scotland.

Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) is an environmental charity with 25 years experience protecting the UK's oceans, waves and beaches for all to enjoy safely and sustainably, via community action, campaigning, volunteering, conservation, education and scientific research.

In 2014 SAS delivered 35 beach cleans in Scotland with the support of over 600 volunteers removing 1,655kgs of litter, mostly plastics. Single use containers are consistently present on Scottish beaches. A plastic bottle can take between 450-1,000 years to break down in the marine environment. As these bottles breakdown they fragment into smaller and smaller particles until they become microplastics. Microplastics can penetrate the food chain, contaminating food and posing a risk to the public. Macro marine litter, including containers are responsible for the death of 100,000 marine mammals and 1 millions sea birds annually. This supports the need for industry to do more to close the loop on litter.

The costs associated with of containers polluting the environment shouldn't be passed onto charities, local volunteers and local authorities, but taken on by the manufacture

In October 2014 SAS launched the Marine Litter Report at SAS's inaugural Protect Our Waves All Party Parliamentary Group meeting. This report sounds the alarm for





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the UK's trashed tidelines, highlighting the environmental impacts on marine ecosystems and wildlife, and the unaffordable costs to industries including fisheries and tourism.

There is now a need for cohesive and effective anti-marine litter measures from all sections of society including community action, increased company responsibility and new government legislation. The Marine Litter Report promotes innovative new initiatives to stop marine litter at source, including implementing smoking bans on beaches, introducing prominent environmental health warnings on single-use packaging, better enforcing fines for littering along our coastline as well as reinstating container deposit schemes. The report also calls on the public to refuse single-use plastic products where possible and for industry to be more accountable for the full lifecycle of packaging and products through extended producer responsibility schemes.

The launch of the SAS's [Marine Litter Report](#) was specifically timed to coincide with Europe's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), which requires the UK to put in place measures to achieve or maintain 'Good Environmental Status' (GES) for our oceans and beaches by 2020. Marine litter will be a key indicator of the health of our coastline during this period. The MSFD timetable requires the UK government to adopt additional measures and actions by 2015 to implement by 2016. The proposed container deposit scheme in Scotland would help meet the requirements of the MSFD.

Professor Richard Thompson, a world-renowned expert of marine litter and micro plastics wrote the preface for the marine litter report. "...Frustratingly the issue of marine litter is a problem that can be solved. The majority of the items that become marine litter are single-use disposable items including packaging and sewage related debris. Such items can bring considerable societal benefits, for example in terms of





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food security and reducing transport related carbon emissions, however these advantages can be realised without the need for release of litter to the oceans. Hence the long term solutions lie in recognising that if designed, used and disposed of appropriately, then end-of-life items that currently accumulate in waste management facilities and as litter in the natural environment can be used as a resource for production of new products. Working toward a circular economy of this kind will help reduce our reliance on non-renewable resources and simultaneously reduce the quantity of waste requiring disposal...”

A copy of the report can be downloaded at: <http://www.sas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SAS-Marine-Litter-Report-Med.pdf>

A container deposit scheme would help move Scotland towards a sustainable circular economy model. A container deposit scheme had been operated within the UK during the 1980s, until plastics bottles and cans became cheap enough to discard as waste. However, there are still examples of the container deposit scheme working in the UK today with Barrs, a Scottish soft drinks manufacture, selling approximately 30 million returnable bottles of Iron Bru annually. Container Deposit schemes are also popular in the United States, Australia and across Europe. European countries with a mandatory deposit scheme have a return rate of approximately 85%, compared with 49% for European countries without a mandatory scheme. Examples of successful container deposit schemes across Europe:

## **Sweden**

Swedes returned an average of 149 cans and bottles per person for deposit and the table below clearly shows the improved in return levels post container deposit legislation.





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Type	2003 return percentage	2005 return percentage
All plastic	17%	30% (44% 2006)
PET	77%	82% (85% 2007)
Aluminium		91%
Glass		99% 33cl 90% 50cl

## Denmark

The 'Danish Bottle Bill' – Deposit System Law was introduced 2000.

In 2007 the Danes returned 84% of cans; 93% plastic bottles; 91% glass bottles.

There are reverse vending machines located in supermarkets to support the scheme.

## Germany

The German scheme features refundable deposits on all one-way containers and voluntary deposits on refillable beverage containers. Manufacturers are responsible for taking back the packaging of their products by means of customers returning to retailer. The introduction of container deposit legislation saw recycle rate reach





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between 95 – 99% from:

50% plastics; 85% Tin; 76% aluminum; 79% Glass. This legislation has successfully removed between 1-2 billion one-way containers from system.

## **Finland**

The Finnish container deposit scheme has delivered impressive return rates; glass bottles close to 100% recycled and reused up to 33 times; aluminum containers approximately 94% (deposit scheme introduced 1996); and PET plastic containers has a return rate of approximately 92% (deposit scheme introduced 2008).

Surfers Against Sewage are aware of the recent poll undertaken by pollsters Survation for the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland identifying 78.8% of the Scottish public polled supporting the introduction of a container deposit scheme in Scotland. In the same poll, only 8.5% of the Scottish public expressed a view that opposed the scheme.

To conclude, single use containers are a significant contributor to littering of Scotland's beautiful countryside and coast. The evidence suggests there is strong support for a container deposit schemes from the Scottish public and container deposit schemes are successful in reducing litter whilst increasing recycling and reuse of containers. Surfers Against Sewage would welcome Scotland leading the UK in adopting a container deposit scheme.

Yours Faithfully.

Andy Cummins, SAS Campaigns Director.

