

Glass is one of the most sustainable materials on Earth. It is 100% recyclable, and can be melted and re-melted without ever reducing its quality. Ensuring we harness the recyclability of glass is crucial in meeting our ambition of a 90% glass collection rate by 2030. We remain concerned about the negative environmental consequences of including glass in a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

Why including glass in a DRS has damaging environmental impacts

It risks increasing the use of raw material and emissions – Making new glass from recycled glass reduces CO₂ emissions and energy use, saving 580kg of carbon dioxide emissions with every tonne of glass re-melted. If DRS machines crush glass to save on space, which happens in other countries, to a point where it cannot be colour sorted, it can no longer be remade into everyday glass containers, increasing the need for raw primary materials and creating more emissions.

It would mean running multiple collection fleets, increasing emissions – A DRS would split glass recycling into two waste streams, with food packaging such as jars remaining part of household collections and beverage containers as part of a DRS. This would require two fleets of collection lorries instead of one dedicated household collection.



The overall annual CO₂ saving from using recycled glass in the production of new bottles, in place of raw materials, **has almost doubled over the past two decades, from 324,796 tonnes in 2002, to 593,978 in 2019**. Existing kerbside collections are helping to increase recycling and reduce CO₂ emissions – **a DRS puts all of this progress at risk.**¹



The **additional cost of including glass in a DRS** means manufacturers will end up paying a higher fee to use it, creating a cost advantage to using plastic containers instead of glass. Evidence from **Germany, Croatia and Denmark shows including glass in a DRS caused a dramatic shift towards the use of plastic bottles**. Not only does this **increase our reliance on plastic**, but puts at risk the UK glass industry which employs 120,000 people.



Including glass in a DRS scheme risks “cherry picking” easy-to-recycle glass beverage bottles from kerbside collections meaning food glass packaging would be recycled through kerbside collections or bottle banks. **This risks making kerbside collections for glass less viable** for local authorities and may result in **more glass heading to landfill**.

Moving towards Net Zero

- The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recognises the role of recycling in meeting the government’s target of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 and have set the ambition to achieve a recycling rate of 70% by 2030. British Glass believe **our industry can achieve a glass recycling rate of 90% in the same period.**²
- Further to this, the CCC acknowledged that whilst recycling rates have plateaued in England, they had **significantly increased in Wales**; a country that has a world-leading rate of kerbside collections.²
- Having one, **overarching policy of consistent household collections, combined with a dedicated communications campaign** will enhance recycling rates through education and an easy to understand system, no matter where you are in the country, rather than a confusing and damaging DRS.

Improve household collections: Lessons from Wales

- Wales has been consistently ahead of the rest of the UK when it comes to recycling rates, with the **third highest household recycling rate in the world**.
- The Welsh Government has set a target for **Wales to become a zero-waste nation by 2050**.
- The current capture rate of glass in household collections is **87.3% in Wales**, the highest of any widely recyclable material.

Improve household collections. **Increase** glass recycling. **Create** a truly circular economy. **#RecycleItRight**

For further information please contact Phil Fenton | P.Fenton@britglass.co.uk

¹ DRS in Scotland – Implications for glass recycling: <https://www.britglass.org.uk/sites/default/files/Scotland%20DRS%20-%20glass%20-%20key%20messages.pdf>

² Committee on Climate Change: Reducing UK emissions Progress Report to Parliament - June 2020