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Edward Mountain MSP  
Convener  
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
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18 April 2023

Dear Edward

To coincide with the First Minister's statement to parliament today, I am writing to update the Committee on the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

The UK Government has not yet agreed an exclusion to the Internal Market Act. This is despite us engaging with them since 2021 on the matter and them indicating they would provide a decision by the Inter-Ministerial Group which took place yesterday. It is incredibly frustrating that this has still not happened and it has created significant uncertainty for businesses.

This Government is committed to DRS and we have listened to businesses' concerns regarding the scheme, particularly retailers and small producers calling for a delay to allow them further time to get ready.

For these reasons, we have taken the decision to delay the launch of the scheme by six months until 1 March 2024. This provides businesses with a full 10 months from now to get fully ready for scheme.

This additional time will allow for confirmation of the Internal Market Act exclusion, resolution of outstanding operational issues and extensive testing of IT and logistic systems.

I will be setting out further details to Parliament on Thursday 20 April.

Kind regards

**LORNA SLATER**

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