



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Nicole Paterson  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Environment Protection Agency

By email only

**Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
Committee**

c/o Clerk to the Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

[netzero.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:netzero.committee@parliament.scot)

12 June 2024

Dear Ms Paterson

**The Persistent Organic Pollutants (Amendment) Regulations 2024**

The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee will consider the Persistent Organic Pollutants (Amendment) Regulations 2024 at its meeting on 25 June. These would be UK regulations that the Scottish Ministers are proposing to consent to the UK Government making. The Scottish Ministers are seeking the view of the Scottish Parliament on this matter under an agreed [protocol](#) for scrutiny of certain proposed UK statutory instruments.

The proposed instrument would amend EU Regulation 2019/1021 on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), which is now assimilated UK law. It will implement changes to the Stockholm Convention on POPs adopted by the Parties to the Stockholm Convention (which include the UK) in May 2023.

The Stockholm Convention lists 31 POPs, defined by four main criteria: they are persistent, toxic, bioaccumulative, and transportable across international borders. The Convention aims to protect human health and the environment by prohibiting, eliminating or restricting the global production and use of POPs.

The notification sets out that the 2024 Regulations will amend the current law in numerous ways: they will amend three existing entries in Annex I (Substances listed in the Convention and in the Protocol as well as substances listed only in the Convention); amend one entry and insert four new entries to Annex IV (List of substances subject to waste management provisions set out in Article 7); and insert two new waste classification descriptions, amend one and insert four new maximum

concentration limits to Part 2 of Annex V (Wastes and operations to which Article 7(4)(b) applies).

The amendments relate to a number of different POPs with multiple uses across various sectors, including POPs which have been banned for a number of years, and the restrictions refer to how POPs are managed as waste. Examples of products and uses potentially impacted include certain flame retardants used in plastics and textiles, electrical wire and construction materials, pesticides, and certain surfactants used in fire-fighting foams, paints and paper.

The key driver behind the changes is to reflect changes to international law via the Stockholm Convention but in some areas (according to the notification), the changes will go further than the Convention. The notification also provides a breakdown and comparison of a number of areas (see 'EU alignment' section in notification) where the 2024 UK Regulations will diverge from the EU POPs Regulation, following on from tightened restrictions introduced in the EU in 2023.

The power to amend Annexes to the UK POPs Regulation in response to amendments to the Stockholm Convention, or to scientific and technical progress, sits with the Secretary of State DEFRA for England, Welsh Ministers for Wales and Scottish Ministers for Scotland. But the UK Secretary of State may make changes for a devolved administration if, as here, they consent.

In appearing to consent to diverge from new EU law, the Scottish Ministers appear not to be "keeping pace" with EU law, which they have publicly committed to do "where appropriate". It appears that this is an area of policy where the Scottish Government would be able to make different provisions from the rest of the UK.

More information on the regulations is provided in the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy's [notification letter of 21 May](#).

In advance of the Committee's consideration of the regulations, we would appreciate your views on the following areas:

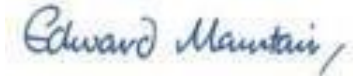
1. As enforcement agency for POPs, were you consulted on the proposed changes in the 2024 UK Regulations and can you share your views?
2. What monitoring information is available for the presence of POPs (specifically those which the Regulations are impacting on) in the environment in Scotland? Is information available on whether the levels of POPs are currently in line with requirements regarding good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive or other requirements?
3. Specifically regarding areas where the notification states that the proposed UK Regulations do not align with EU law, do you agree with the assessments made by the UK Government that lack of evidence and challenges around industry implementation and cost mean tighter restrictions are currently not possible?

4. What are the key enforcement challenges with the current POPs regime and how will they be impacted by the proposed changes?

Apologies for the quick turnaround but the Committee would appreciate a response by midday on Friday 21 June.

Please contact the Committee clerks should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Mountain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Edward Mountain MSP  
Convener  
**Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee**