



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Trudy Harrison MP
Minister for Natural Environment and Land Use

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk
W: gov.uk/defra

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Dear Dame Glenys,

Thank you for your letter of 28th October. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of State. As indicated, I am content for this reply to be published alongside your initial letter.

As I set out when we recently met, HM Government remains committed to the Environment Act 2021. This includes the requirement to lay statutory instruments for **environmental targets**. The Secretary of State has stated that it is our aim to publish the final targets by the end of the calendar year, subject to concluding the normal processes of collective agreement across Government. She reiterated this position at her appearance before the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee on 30th November. I will keep you updated about the progress of both the targets and the publication of the Environmental Improvement Plan, for which the deadline is 31st January 2023.

Looking to the other deadlines you included in the annex of your letter, I have provided a brief summary:

Situation report on the disposal of urban waste water and sludge

The UK government submitted the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive report to the EU Commission on 31st December 2020, which was then published in full on Waterbase. The duty to report to the EU commission fell away on EU exit, so a regulation setting an equivalent duty was added to the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations. It was never the intention to duplicate the requirement or for both duties to apply to one reporting period. Since the published report had the same content as required under the new regulation, I consider that the aim of the new duty was satisfied. The next report is due to be published by 31st December this year, and I intend to publish it ahead of this deadline.

Updated River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)

The 22nd December 2021 deadline for publication of the third cycle update was missed due to the Environment Agency having to redirect resources to deal with the Covid pandemic. Stakeholders also asked for more time to engage in the RBMP consultation because of the pandemic's impacts on resources. River basin management planning is a continuous process, and the second cycle (2015) plans remain in place until the third cycle plans are published and implemented. The revised proposed RBMPs were submitted to ministers

and were subsequently made publicly available on gov.uk on 21st October 2022. We expect to have final plans approved by ministers by 22nd December 2022.

Reviews of Defra's environmental impact assessment (EIA) regimes

We are planning to publish a single report on all four EIA regulations that we have a duty to review, which will provide an evidence base for Defra's input to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, and subsequent reforms to EIA regimes.

National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP) review

The National Emission Ceilings Regulations 2018 (NECR) requires a review of the NAPCP within 18 months of either the publication of an inventory showing the UK has exceeded a national emissions reduction commitment or a projection showing a risk of exceeding a national emission reduction commitment. The NECR also requires the public to be consulted on any significant revision to the NAPCP. Projections published on 5th March 2021 showed a risk the UK would exceed emission targets for 4 pollutants in 2030. A draft revised NAPCP was published for consultation, which ran from 25th July until 4th September. All consultation responses are being carefully considered and we intend to publish our response shortly.

Yours sincerely,



TRUDY HARRISON MP

Dame Glenys Stacey
Chair, Office for Environmental Protection
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

privateoffice@theoep.org.uk