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Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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Your ref: J Welsh
Our ref: MC2019/13300/PW

15 July 2019

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 20 June to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent about the Environment Bill. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP) sets out how, over a generation, we will replenish depleted soils, rid seas and rivers of the rubbish affecting our planet, cut greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse our air of toxic pollutants and develop cleaner, more sustainable energy sources. We will also manage pressures on the environment by mitigating and adapting to climate change, minimising waste, managing our exposure to chemicals and enhancing biosecurity.

On 19 December 2018, the Government published the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) clauses; these draft clauses will be critical to our new Environment Bill. The clauses set out how we will create a pioneering new system of green governance, establishing an Office for Environmental Protection, to ensure we succeed in leaving the environment in a better condition than we found it. The Environment Bill will also introduce a set of environmental principles that will be used to guide future Government policy making and place the 25 YEP on a statutory footing.

Regarding targets, the new statutory cycle of environmental planning, monitoring and reporting will incentivise sustained improvement in our natural world and ensure that we deliver our commitments now and in the future. We will explore options for including additional cross-cutting targets for environmental improvement as part of this framework.

These measures are only part of a broader intended Environment Bill, which will include ambitious legislative measures to take direct action to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age: air quality, nature recovery, waste and resource efficiency and water resource management. The Environment Bill will be introduced early in the second Session of this Parliament.

We are committed to eliminating all avoidable plastic waste, and are also working towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. We have already made good progress, for example by banning microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, however we have committed to going further and faster in our world-leading Resources and Waste Strategy. The Strategy makes clear that where existing powers are insufficient to realise our ambition, we will take new powers to do so, including through the Environment Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Thérèse

DR THERESE COFFEY MP

