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**PRESS RELEASE**

**UK WATERSPORTS BODIES WRITE TO MICHAEL GOVE CALLING FOR UK-WIDE DEPOSIT  
RETURN SCHEME ON ALL SINGLE-USE DRINKS CONTAINERS**

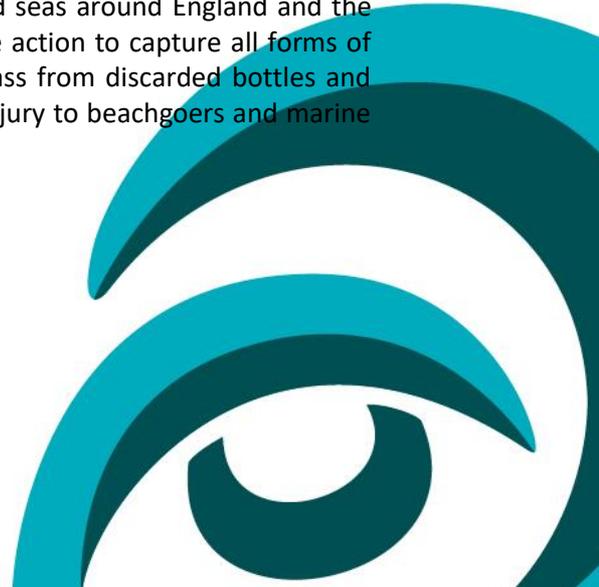
- Coalition including big names from the watersports sector have written the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on him to introduce Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England to help fight ocean plastic pollution crisis.
- Letter calls for a comprehensive, UK-wide solution targeting plastic, metal and glass drinks containers.
- UK uses a staggering 38.5 million single-use plastic bottles every day. Only half of these are recycled.
- Surfers Against Sewage campaign for bottle deposits receives over 325,000 signatures demonstrating broad public support for DRS.
- Over 150 plastic bottles litter each mile of UK coastline.
- Data from the Great British Beach Clean 2017 shows that during a three-day period volunteers picked up a staggering 14064 metal, glass and plastic drinks bottles and cans (minus caps and lids).

**LONDON, 5<sup>th</sup> March:** Nine watersports and marine conservation organisations have written a letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, in a show of support for the introduction of bottle deposits in England.

The coalition letter has been signed by major sporting bodies including the Royal Yachting Association, the British Sub-Aqua Club, the Outdoor Swimming Society, Surfing England and Land Rover BAR. Other signatories include marine conservation organisations Surfers Against Sewage, the Marine Conservation Society UK, the Blue Marine Foundation, and Fathoms Free.

Representing surfers, swimmers, kayakers, sailors, divers and other recreational water users, the letter highlights growing concern at the problems empty cans and bottles cause in the marine and terrestrial environment.

Plastic waste is now ubiquitous across all waterways, lakes and seas around England and the UK. The letter calls on the Government to take comprehensive action to capture all forms of litter caused by plastic, metal and glass containers. Broken glass from discarded bottles and sharp metal edges resulting from metal cans, can cause both injury to beachgoers and marine



wildlife. The letter recommends that the Government to create the best possible system covering all plastic, glass and metal single-use drinks containers.

Crucially, the letter calls for a consistent UK-wide approach to the introduction of deposit return schemes and urges the Government to work with counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to deliver the most effective system for public and business users.

In 2017 the Scottish Parliament backed the introduction of a deposit return scheme. In December the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) published its report '[Plastic bottles: Turning Back the Plastic Tide](#)' recommending that the 'Government introduces a legislated Deposit Return Scheme for all PET plastic drinks bottles'. Last week the Government indicated that its decision on DRS could be delayed.

The [EAC responded](#) by accusing the government of 'dragging its feet' and having 'not adequately acted upon, or responded to, the Committee's recommendations on deposit return schemes and producer responsibility obligations.'

**Hugo Tagholm, CEO Surfers Against Sewage, said** "The time for action is now and we urge the government not to kick the proverbial plastic bottle into the long grass, but implement new policies and legislation that the country is crying out for to finally go plastic free."

A staggering 38.5 million single-use plastic bottles are used every day in the UK. Only half of these are recycled, with many ending up on beaches and in our oceans.

**Rob Thompson, founder of marine litter charity Fathoms Free, said** "Fathoms Free have observed a dramatic reduction in plastic bags littering the marine environment since the introduction of the 5p carrier bag charge, having previously been one of the most commonly found items whilst diving. Plastic bottles are also amongst our most regularly collected items (being made of a polymer type that sinks). We are confident that a deposit return scheme will be a simple and highly effective solution to reducing this type of marine litter."

**ENDS**

**For further information and interviews, please contact:**

Hugo Tagholm, CEO SAS, 07980 727 294 / [hugo@sas.org.uk](mailto:hugo@sas.org.uk) / 01872 553 001





**Surfers Against Sewage**  
Unit 2, Wheal Kitty Workshops  
St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 ORD

**T:** 01872 553 001    **F:** 01872 552 615  
**E:** [info@sas.org.uk](mailto:info@sas.org.uk)    **W:** [www.sas.org.uk](http://www.sas.org.uk)

James Harvey, Campaign Officer SAS, 01872 553 001 / [james@sas.org.uk](mailto:james@sas.org.uk)

### Notes to Editors

#### Surfers Against Sewage

Surfers Against Sewage is a national marine conservation and campaigning charity that inspires, unites and empowers communities to take action to protect oceans, beaches, waves and wildlife.

[www.sas.org.uk](http://www.sas.org.uk)

