



# Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Rebecca Pow MP  
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Dear Nina and Fellow Signatories,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January to the Secretary of State about compostable packaging. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this. Our goal is to maximise resource efficiency and minimise plastic waste – by following the principles of the waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, recycle – to keep plastics in circulation for longer. We will do this by making producers more responsible for the plastics they make and use.

It is important to note that, since the publication of the Resources and Waste Strategy, we are now committed to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being reusable or recyclable by 2025, not compostable. Compostable plastics are inherently single-use and are not in line with our vision for a circular economy for plastics. Though we recognise there is a valid role for compostable plastics to play in some niche applications, such as tea bags or fruit labels, packaging as a whole does not constitute a niche use and therefore we will continue to prioritise the reuse and recycling of plastic packaging, where a reduction cannot be achieved.

It will be the responsibility of the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme Administrator to determine the fees producers will pay for different types of packaging. This includes determining how fees will vary depending on the recyclability of packaging. There will also be provision for the Scheme Administrator to adjust the fees a producer pays where a majority of local authorities do not collect a type of packaging for recycling and producers instead put in place arrangements for collecting this packaging and can provide evidence of the quantity of packaging that has been recycled.

The fees paid by producers will cover the costs of collecting and managing household packaging waste and packaging discarded in street bins. The fees raised will be used to make payments to local authorities for the provision of these services. If the packaging types that local authorities are required to collect for recycling should change in the future, then the fees paid by producers will need to change to reflect the costs of these new services.

Biodegradable and compostable plastics are not included as a separate recyclable waste stream in the Environment Act 2021, and we do not propose to include these materials in any of the other recyclable waste streams at the present time. There are, however, provisions in the Environment Act 2021 to add additional recyclable waste streams in the future, subject to certain conditions including ensuring that the material is suitable for collection and recycling and ensuring that end markets exist for the material.

Given the above, the mandatory collection of biodegradable and compostable packaging (as a separate recyclable waste stream either collected separately or co-collected with another waste stream, such as food waste) is not proposed unless such conditions are met.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write about this important issue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Pow', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**REBECCA POW MP**