Defra fail to understand UK glass sector concerns in new EPR fees



British Glass acknowledges Defra's recent decision to reduce base fees under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, but believes the

reduction falls short of the changes necessary to fully support the UK glass industry and promote circularity.

While any reduction in fees is a step in the right direction, this marginal decrease does not adequately reflect the superior environmental credentials of glass. Glass is a 100% recyclable material, recycled in a closed loop without losing quality, and yet the modest reduction in base fees does not provide the level of relief needed to ensure its full potential is realised under the EPR system.

Defra's decision not to change the methodology significantly and a lack of transparency over the calculations has not addressed the concerns which we raised during stakeholder meetings with Defra officials last month.

These fees will put glass at a competitive disadvantage, especially in the beverage market, against lighter alternatives such as plastic and metal, causing material switch to less recyclable and less circular materials. We are yet to see a full and recent impact assessment and believe many of the issues would not have arisen if this had been properly conducted.

Glass beverage containers will also pay EPR costs from 2025 to 2027 while competing materials will not, due to the misalignment of the EPR and DRS policies. This will be extremely detrimental to the UK glass industry and will see glass' market share supressed particularly in low-margin product ranges such as food, beers, and mixers.

For a 330ml beverage container policy costs between 2025 and October 2027 are;

- Glass bottle = 6p (EPR and PRN)
- Aluminium can = 0.13p (PRN)
- Plastic bottle = 0.28p (PRN)

Under the first iteration of fees glass beverage policy costs for 330ml container were 60 times those of aluminium and 24 times those of plastic. In this release it is 47 and 21 times respectively. Whilst slightly better, it is still a significant difference in a highly competitive market.

"While we appreciate Defra's effort to adjust the fees, this reduction does not go far enough to support glass producers,"

said Dave Dalton, CEO of British Glass.

"We had hoped for a more meaningful reduction and alignment of the EPR and DRS timeframes that would incentivise the use of glass as a sustainable packaging option and

truly reflect its environmental advantages. Unfortunately, the modest decrease and the misalignment of EPR and DRS policy still places significant financial pressure on the glass industry, which will lead to demand reduction and inevitably site closures and job losses due to material switching."

British Glass remains committed to advocating for a fairer volume-based EPR framework and will continue to work with industry partners and policymakers to ensure that the environmental benefits of glass are properly recognised in future regulatory decisions.

What are we asking for?

1. EPR base fees should be calculated to avoid material switching
2. EPR & DRS timetable to align or DRS in scope materials to pay EPR fees
3. Full methodology for glass EPR calculation
4. Impact assessment on EPR fees on packaging market

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