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Our Reference: 202100218823  
Your Reference: Recycling and Food Trays

22 November 2021

Dear Mr Cornes

Thank you for your letter of 25 June to the First Minister concerning the recycling of food trays. I am replying as this falls into my portfolio as Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in this response. I would like to congratulate East Dunbartonshire Council on achieving a recycling rate of 55.3% and successfully diverting all organic waste from landfill by 2020. I'm pleased to see the progress your Council is making towards achieving our targets.

The Scottish Government is progressing reforms that will see a strong incentive placed on manufacturers to reduce excess packaging and ensure that the packaging they use is recyclable. Extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging, which we are working to introduce alongside the other UK administrations, will mean producers are required to fund the full net cost of effective and efficient local authority collections for packaging waste. This will include the food packaging you refer to in your letter.

A key part of our proposals for packaging EPR is fee modulation: producers will pay more into the system for packaging that is difficult to recycle and less for packaging that is easier to recycle. This will provide a strong incentive to switch to recyclable packaging. I understand that my officials are in regular contact with the Waste Managers' Network to ensure that local-authority representatives are kept up to date and have a chance to comment on our proposals.

The Scottish Government's policy towards local authorities' spending is to allow local authorities the financial freedom to operate independently. As such, the vast majority of funding is provided by means

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of a block grant. It is the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to allocate the total financial resources available to them, on the basis of local needs and priorities, having first fulfilled their statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities. However, we are also considering how the new packaging EPR system can directly support local authorities in bringing their systems into line with the requirement for efficient and effective systems. It is also important that the packaging EPR and our own Household Recycling Charter are aligned. Through the ongoing review in partnership with local government, we are carefully considering how the Charter's Code of Practice can complement the new packaging EPR.

I hope this information is helpful in addressing your concerns about food tray recycling.

Kind regards



**LORNA SLATER MSP**

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