

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2021

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about plastic waste.

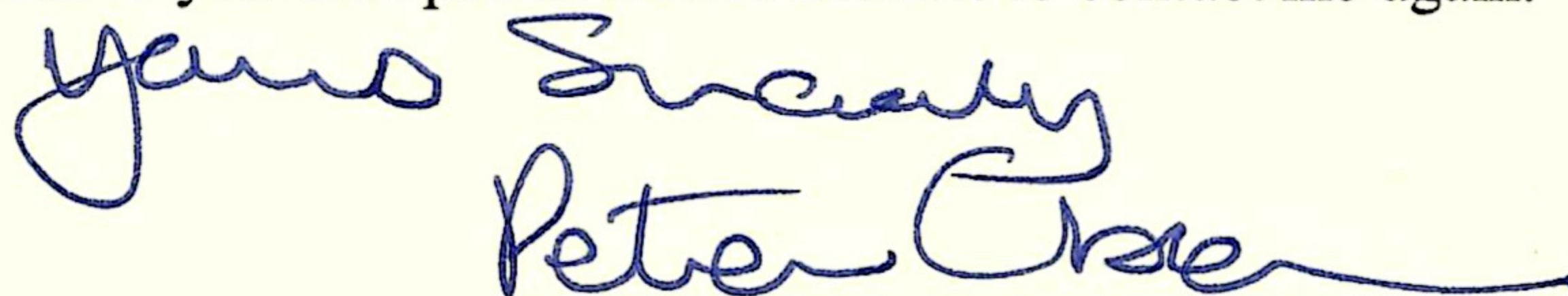
First and foremost, I am glad that none of the waste that is collected for recycling by Darlington Borough Council is sent abroad for processing. I am assured that the council only collects materials that can be recycled, reused, or treated in the UK.

More broadly, I am pleased that the UK is a global leader in tackling plastic pollution and my Ministerial colleagues remain committed to clamping down on illegal waste exports. I am pleased to have been elected on a manifesto which pledged to ban the export of all plastic waste to non-OECD countries, and Ministers plan to introduce tougher controls on waste exports, including mandatory electronic waste tracking which will make it harder for criminals to obtain and export waste illegally. I understand that work is underway to consult on these measures and research has been commissioned to better understand existing UK plastic waste recycling capacity. I know that Ministers currently plan to consult before the end of 2022 on options to deliver the proposed ban.

It is important that we promote UK-based recycling and export less waste to be processed abroad. I am therefore pleased that we are recycling more in the UK than ever before. This is not only good for the environment but can boost economic growth and create jobs. Where the UK cannot currently recycle materials economically, exports can help ensure those materials are recycled in recipient countries. While there is a legitimate global market for secondary materials, it must be, and is, subject to strict controls.

The four UK regulators have a range of enforcement tools and sanctions available in respect to waste exports offences. In England in 2018/19, the Environment Agency inspected almost 1,000 shipping containers at ports and returned over 200 of those to sites. During this period, the Agency also prevented 12,000 tonnes of waste from reaching ports which may have otherwise been exported illegally. It is welcome that any operators found to be illegally exporting waste can face severe sanctions, from financial penalties to imprisonment for a period of up to two years.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.



PETER GIBSON MP

*Member of Parliament for Darlington*

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