

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about the reports that Amazon is destroying unsold products in the UK.

I have been reassured that my ministerial colleagues are aware of reports of Amazon destroying unsold products and are considering whether there needs to be a change in the law. I am glad that the environment secretary, George Eustice MP, has said that the Government is also in talks with Amazon about these extraordinary findings.

Businesses that handle waste, including companies like Amazon, are obliged to follow the waste hierarchy, under the Waste Regulations 2011, which requires action to prevent waste as the priority option. Failure to meet the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to apply these steps can lead to enforcement action from the Environment Agency in England.

It is imperative we end the throwaway culture and recycle more of our waste. I would like to assure you that I am committed to creating a more circular economy for our waste and resources, and by 2035 the Government wants to be recycling at least 65 per cent of our municipal waste with a maximum of 10 per cent going to landfill. Equally, I do not want to see good food go to waste. I am therefore pleased that the Government supports the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and its work with retailers and other food businesses who play a key role in influencing household food waste through interventions such as pack sizing and labelling. These measures all help consumers to buy what they need and use what they buy. Ministers are also supporting the Courtauld 2025 Commitment, delivered by WRAP, which aims to reduce UK food waste by 20 per cent per capita by 2025, based on a 2015 baseline.

I understand that current regulations require sellers of electrical equipment to offer a free take-back service for waste electricals or join the Distributor Takeback Scheme to help fund local authority recycling services. Ministers are looking at the regulations to see how they can make sure all retailers take greater responsibility for electricals. This could include increased doorstep collections and strengthened takeback obligations placed on retailers and internet sellers.

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More widely, through the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state than they inherited it. Ministers will help do this by transforming the way we use our waste and resources, and by 2042 they want to have eliminated all avoidable plastic waste, with all avoidable waste being stopped by 2050.

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.

Yours sincerely
Peter Gibson

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