



Beauty, Aesthetics and Wellbeing APPG

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

10 March 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Congratulations on your appointment as the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Firstly, as Co-Chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Beauty, Aesthetics and Wellbeing, we would like to introduce you to our APPG which was first set up in the last Parliament to celebrate the beauty and aesthetics industry, explore the challenges it faces and discuss how we can support it to ensure it continues to thrive.

We are writing having recently received representations from the beauty industry, including household brands such as L'Oréal and Neal's Yard Remedies, leading cosmetic trade associations and research experts, on what they are doing to improve their sustainability practices and what barriers they face.

There are two issues of concern that have been brought to our attention which we would like to raise with you.

Organic cosmetic products

We were pleased to hear from the industry the EU legislation and regulations mandating the ingredients that can be used in cosmetic products in the UK is a gold standard around the world, and covers all products on the market, no matter how they are made, what ingredients they use, and where or by whom they are sold.

However, it was concerning to learn that regulations do not set standards for the sustainability of beauty products, particularly around the labelling of cosmetic products as 'organic'.

In the case of food and drink products, regulations are in place covering all stages of production, preparation and distribution for products to be labelled and marketed as organic. While independent industry standards exist covering the criteria companies must meet to label their cosmetic products as organic or natural produced to the highest feasible sustainability practices – such as the Soil Association's COSMOS-standard – no such regulations are in place to protect the use of the term 'organic' in the labelling and marketing of cosmetic products.

We are concerned this leads to 'greenwashing' in the beauty industry, where consumers are led to believe that the companies from which they buy their products are doing more to protect the environment than may be the case in reality.

Post-Brexit transition, it is essential that future UK regulation covering cosmetic product ingredients must maintain current high standards set by existing regulations, and we urge the Government to



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consider including the use of the term 'organic' in the labelling and marketing of products in future regulations.

Recycling beauty waste

On the issue of packaging and waste, the industry recognises it has an important role to play in creating a more circular economy and we believe that improving the recyclability of beauty and cosmetic products will be crucial to tackling waste in the sector. While the industry must do more to reduce the amount of packaging of cosmetic products and ensure it is recyclable as possible, the Government and local authorities also have a role to play in helping them do so.

At present there are varying recycling policies across the country which act a barrier to brands who are working hard to reduce avoidable waste including plastics and other non-recyclable substances from their products and packaging. While many brands in the cosmetics industry continue to trial in-store bottle refill and return schemes, these have had relatively low take up among consumers.

Therefore, more clear and consistent recycling policies are crucial to help brands produce more sustainable products and to incentivise consumers to dispose of these in the appropriate way. The Government rightly recognised in the Resources and Waste Strategy that recycling is confusing for individuals and we welcome measures in the Environment Bill enabling the Government to specify a core set of materials to be collected by all local authorities and waste operators.

In considering the core set of materials which all collectors of waste will be required to collect for recycling, we urge the Government to consider the materials used in the packaging of cosmetic products.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Kind regards,

Carolyn Harris MP and Judith Cummins MP

Co-Chairs
APPG on Beauty, Aesthetics and Wellbeing