



1 November 2024

(24-7723)

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

Original: English

NOTIFICATION

The following notification is being circulated in accordance with Article 10.6

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| 1. Notifying Member: <u>UNITED KINGDOM</u> If applicable, name of local government involved (Article 3.2 and 7.2): Northern Ireland Executive |
| 2. Agency responsible: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Environmental Resources Policy Division Name and address (including telephone and fax numbers, email and website addresses, if available) of agency or authority designated to handle comments regarding the notification shall be indicated if different from above: UK TBT Enquiry Point Trade Policy, Implementation and Negotiations Department for Business and Trade Old Admiralty Building London SW1A 2DY tbtenquiriesuk@businessandtrade.gov.uk |
| 3. Notified under Article 2.9.2 [X], 2.10.1 [], 5.6.2 [], 5.7.1 [], 3.2 [], 7.2 [], other: |
| 4. Products covered (HS or CCCN where applicable, otherwise national tariff heading. ICS numbers may be provided in addition, where applicable): Organic surface-active agents (other than soap); surface-active preparations, washing preparations (including auxiliary washing preparations) and cleaning preparations, whether or not containing soap, other than those of heading 3401. (HS 3402) Insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, herbicides, anti-sprouting products and plant-growth regulators, disinfectants and similar products, put up in forms or packings for retail sale or as preparations or articles (for example, sulphur-treated bands, wicks and candles, and fly-papers) HS 3808) |
| 5. Title, number of pages and language(s) of the notified document: Draft legislation: The Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025; (5 page(s), in English) |
| 6. Description of content: These regulations introduce a ban on the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic for domestic purposes subject to exceptions. These regulations will apply to all businesses that operate in Northern Ireland. A "wet wipe" means a non-woven piece of fabric which has been pre-wetted, and which is not designed or intended to be re-used. Under these regulations "plastic" means a material consisting of polymer as defined in |

Article 3(5) of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), to which additives or other substances may have been added, and which can function as a main structural component of final products, with the exception of natural polymers that have not been chemically modified.

These restrictions will **not** apply to:

- The manufacture or import of wet wipes containing plastic.
- Supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic, for the purpose of some business-to-business sales, as specified in the regulations.
- The supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic by a retail pharmacy business, subject to exemptions.
- The supply of wet wipes containing plastic for use for medical purposes by or under the direction of a healthcare professional or by a healthcare professional for medical purposes.

These regulations will apply in Northern Ireland. The other UK nations, England, Scotland and Wales will introduce their own legislation with the same intent and scope to ban wet wipes containing plastic in each of their respective nations.

Breach of these prohibitions will be an offence under the regulations and will lead to a summary conviction of a fine.

The draft legislation provides a transition period of 18 months for industry and retailers.

7. Objective and rationale, including the nature of urgent problems where applicable: The proposed regulations restrict the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic on the grounds that they cause harm to the environment.

The NI Executive has committed to banning unnecessary single use plastic, where there are suitable alternatives in The Northern Ireland Environmental Improvement Plan which was published on 27 September 2024.

Wet wipes containing plastic are an unnecessary source of plastic and microplastic pollution which recent evidence suggests may have significant impacts on plant, animal and human health.

Wet wipes containing plastic contribute to environmental harm through littering and being wrongly flushed, as well as through production and disposal emissions.

The proposed regulations are intended to reduce the use of wet wipes containing plastic, thereby reducing the amount of plastic entering the natural environment and the amount of microplastics entering the food chain and water treatment facilities.; Protection of human health or safety; Protection of animal or plant life or health; Protection of the environment

8. Relevant documents:

Draft legislation: The Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 (attached)

Economic Annex prepared for the consultation (see Related Documents section) (published 14 October 2023) [Consultation on the proposed ban of the manufacture supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

Joint UK-wide consultation on a ban on wet wipes containing plastic (published 14 October 2023) [Consultation on the proposed ban of the manufacture supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

Joint UK-wide government response to the consultation on a ban on wet wipes containing plastic (published 22 April 2024) [Wet wipes containing plastic: proposed ban on the manufacture, supply and sale - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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| 9. | Proposed date of adoption: January 2025 Proposed date of entry into force: June 2026 |
| 10. | Final date for comments: 60 days from notification |
| 11. | Texts available from: National enquiry point [X] or address, telephone and fax numbers and email and website addresses, if available, of other body: UK TBT Enquiry Point Trade Policy, Implementation and Negotiations Department for Business and Trade Old Admiralty Building London SW1A 2DY tbtenquiriesuk@businessandtrade.gov.uk https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2024/TBT/GBR/24_07460_00_e.pdf |