

Maree Todd MSP
Minister for Women, Sport and Public Health
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

By email

10 March 2023

Dear Minister,

Restricting Alcohol Advertising & Promotion: Response from Scotland Food & Drink

I am writing to outline our response to the government's consultation on proposals to restrict alcohol advertising and promotion.

Scotland Food & Drink is the leadership body for the food and drink industry in Scotland. As well as directly supporting more than 400 members, including more than 100 alcohol producers, we lead the Scotland Food & Drink Partnership, a collaboration of industry organisations, the Scottish Government, and key agencies.

This Spring we will launch a refreshed 10-year strategy for the national food and drink industry. This sets out how, by working together across industry and the public sector, we can secure the resilience of the food and drink industry across all sectors, as well as enabling and maximising long-term, sustainable and environmentally responsible growth. Delivering on this strategy will ensure that the £15bn food and drink industry continues to play a major role in building a stronger economy, with vibrant businesses providing quality jobs for thriving communities across Scotland.

We fully recognise that our long-term success, and the profile of Scotland on the international stage, depends on our ability to tackle complex environmental and social challenges. This sometimes means making difficult choices, and our role is to contribute to these discussions collaboratively and constructively in a fact-based and balanced manner – which is the way in which we have approached our response to this consultation. Indeed, we do not believe beginning a debate from a fixed pro or anti-alcohol position is appropriate to this discussion, and we have sought to achieve argumentation that respects independent, high-quality evidence, which considers all factors, and listens to all voices (although our own engagement has been with the alcohol sector).

We remain keen to explore alternative perspectives and evolve our position through discussion, so please consider our response with that in mind. We, and the industry we represent, are resolutely open-minded about targeted solutions that could help in reducing alcohol-related harms.

We thank you for inviting us to the recent roundtable event, which we found very helpful. We have also hosted a very well-attended industry webinar and issued an industry survey about these proposals, which received 59 responses. The position we have arrived at is based on these activities, alongside research and ongoing discussions with stakeholders and other organisations.

As a possible next step, we would like to invite you to an industry forum, at a date and venue to suit you, to hear from a range of Scottish based producers directly and to enable us to maintain momentum with these conversations.

I appreciate you considering our position and offer and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Iain Baxter,
Chief Executive,
Scotland Food & Drink

Attachments:

1. Our questionnaire response.
2. A paper exploring the issues.
3. A short report of our survey findings.

CC – Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
CC – Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
CC – Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy of Scotland