



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill – Government Amendments

DATE 14 November 2025

BY Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

I am very pleased that the Senedd, on 11 November, approved the General Principles and Financial Resolution of the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill and the Bill has successfully moved to Stage 2.

I would like to thank Members and stakeholders who have contributed, supported, and worked with us to develop the proposals for this vital legislation. Their combined perspective, expertise, and challenge have been instrumental in shaping and refining this Bill so far and will continue to be as we go through the next stages of the legislative process.

Ahead of and alongside my formal response to the Committees, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight particular areas where I would like to explore, with committee, the opportunity for Government amendments during the future stages of the Bill.

Part 1 – Environmental Objective and Principles

In respect of Part 1 of the Bill, I intend to bring forward amendments to:

- set a firm date by when the environmental principles and integrating environmental protection statement ('the section 6 statement') must be laid before the Senedd and published.
- include a process to enable Senedd scrutiny and recommendations before the section 6 statement is finalised.
- require the Welsh Ministers to regularly review the section 6 statement, at least once per Senedd term.

- clarify that the Welsh Ministers' duty to have special regard to the environmental principles and integrate environmental protection applies to all policy making unless there is no or a negligible effect on the environment, which is a very low threshold.
- require the Welsh Ministers to explain in the section 6 statement how they propose to determine whether a policy has no or a negligible effect on the environment.
- require the Welsh Ministers to explain in the section 6 statement how they consider the environmental principles should be interpreted.

I will also explore further clarifying the definition of “policy” to ensure the duties are clear and effective.

Part 2 – The Office of Environmental Governance Wales

For Part 2 of the Bill, I intend to bring forward amendments to:

- require Welsh Ministers to provide sufficient funding to the OEGW.
- require Welsh Ministers to have regard to protecting the OEGW's independence when exercising functions relating to it.
- ensure the Welsh Ministers have no role in the review committee process by removing the requirement for them to hold a list of individual members to be appointed.
- reduce the number of independent persons required for the review committee process to be 'at least 1'.
- require Welsh Ministers to consult the OEGW, and any other persons it considers necessary, when amending the definition of environmental law by regulations.
- ensure citizens are able to access environmental justice by providing representations directly to the OEGW and ensure they will be kept informed of the OEGW's response to representations and any action taken.
- require the OEGW's functions to be commenced within two years of Royal Assent, with an option to extend for a further limited period but only if the Senedd agrees.
- enable the Senedd to have greater involvement in the appointment process by being part of the recruitment panel for non-executive roles.
- provide that a review of a compliance/urgent compliance notice by the OEGW review committee must be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Part 3 – Biodiversity Targets

For Part 3 of the Bill, I intend to bring forward amendments to:

- Reduce the timescale for bringing forward draft regulations setting targets in priority areas from three years to two years.
- Reduce the timescale for the Welsh Ministers to lay a report before the Senedd explaining why a target has not been met and what steps they'll take to achieve the target from twelve months to six months.
- Require the Welsh Ministers to set both short-term and long-term targets for the species and ecosystems priority areas.
- Require Welsh Ministers to publish a report summarising the consultation process and representations received before setting targets and when publishing their section 6 plan.
- Introduce a duty on the Welsh Ministers to review, at least once every ten years, the effectiveness of current targets in contributing to halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity. If such a review concludes further targets should be set, such targets to be laid before the Senedd within two years of the review.
- Introduce additional requirements for the Welsh Ministers' section 6 plan, including applying the principles of sustainable management of natural resources when preparing that plan, setting out the actions to be taken to contribute to the Global Biodiversity Framework's 2050 vision, proposals covering the areas of responsibility of each of the Welsh Ministers, how the Welsh Ministers intend to maintain a target standard once it's been met, and how the Welsh Ministers intend to promote awareness of biodiversity.

I look forward to continued engagement with Members and stakeholders as we move through the next stages of the legislative process. Now, more than ever before, we must all act to protect and improve Wales's natural environment, which is so vital to our well-being.