



Tyre Recovery Association  
PO Box 13379  
Billericay  
Essex  
CM12 2GY

T: **07932 702173**  
E: **office@tyrerecovery.org.uk**  
W: **www.tyrerecovery.org.uk**

Steve Reed MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

[secretary.state@defra.gov.uk](mailto:secretary.state@defra.gov.uk)  
[steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk)

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

**BBC programme demonstrates need for Urgent Action on End-of-Life Tyre Exports**

I would be surprised to hear that you have not yet listened to or engaged with the BBC's *File on 4* programme, broadcast last week, ***The Tyre Scandal***. The news story ran on associated national channels and was further picked up by international programmes and media. In light of the exposé, the Tyre Recovery Association (TRA) writes to you with the utmost urgency regarding the ongoing crisis of end-of-life tyre (ELT) exports and the severe threat it poses to the UK tyre recycling industry and the global environment. The TRA welcomed your assurance that reducing waste by moving to a circular economy is a top five priority for your department. We are absolutely behind you on those objectives and I write to consider how you approach achieving your aims with our industry.

Last week's BBC investigation, "[Millions of UK tyres meant for recycling sent to furnaces in India](#)," has starkly evidenced the profoundly irresponsible consequences of the current exporting of UK waste. The programme revealed the significant damage inflicted on the environment and the health on local populations in India due to these practices. The programme's framing of the ineffectiveness of our current regulatory approach is particularly alarming to see. As the TRA has sought to highlight to you and your predecessors, UK regulations are failing to prevent the export of ELTs for burning in India. This is despite the illegality of importing tyres into India for pyrolysis.

For years, the TRA has been attempting to convey the gravity of this situation to British government ministers. The BBC's findings unequivocally validate our concerns and the urgent need for immediate action. Action that will properly protect the environment and preserve our UK processing capability (under terminal threat, with TRA members now seeking advice on managing the decline and closure of their operations).

Responsible UK tyre recycling operators possess the capacity and willingness to process these materials domestically. There is currently at least 150,000 tonnes of idle shredding capacity within the UK. However,



Tyre Recovery Association  
PO Box 13379  
Billericay  
Essex  
CM12 2GY

**T: 07932 702173**  
**E: [office@tyrerecovery.org.uk](mailto:office@tyrerecovery.org.uk)**  
**W: [www.tyrerecovery.org.uk](http://www.tyrerecovery.org.uk)**

the continued export of whole ELTs is pushing the UK tyre recycling industry towards collapse - members of the TRA have started seeking advice on closing down their operations so we are on the brink if we are to preserve domestic capability

The UK government can no longer afford to delay addressing this issue. The industry cannot survive indefinitely under the current conditions, and its failure would severely undermine the government's own policy objectives of achieving zero waste and a circular economy.

Furthermore, there are numerous projects that could bring substantial value and economic growth to the UK which are currently stalled, awaiting improved market conditions and government regulations that align with the needs of both industry and the environment.

In light of the BBC's investigation, the Environment Agency (EA) has acknowledged that the time for inaction on illegal tyre exports has passed, as it announced it will conduct a review of its approach to waste tyre shipments. In doing this the EA effectively admits its past shortcomings, their minds no doubt sharpened now they face the prospect of legal action from Leigh Day if they do not rectify the situation.

The TRA, along with the responsible UK tyre recycling industry, has been right to raise the alarm. The EA is also right to now acknowledge the necessity for immediate intervention to bring an end to the export of 1,000 tonnes of tyres a day – with the vast majority bypassing their designated destination.

Therefore, the TRA urges the government to implement an expedient and effective solution without further delay. A crucial first step would be the imposition of a size reduction qualification on ELT exports, a policy successfully embraced by Australia. This measure would ensure that tyres are properly shredded before export, promoting responsible processing and utilizing existing UK capacity. As well easing the market transition away from T8 operators to more robustly permitted operators.

The UK tyre recycling industry is ready and able to contribute significantly to the UK's environmental and economic goals. Most immediately, to assist with the EA review and deliver the meaningful outcomes needed by government and industry, we can provide a task force of expert advisors.

Our members possess the solutions and the capacity to handle this challenge effectively. It is now time for action to straighten up just a couple of crucial regulations. Existing latent shredding capacity (150,000 tonnes) is currently in position to absorb the volume increase predicted from the removal of the T8. The government would benefit from providing clear direction that from the start of October 2025 that the UK will only allow export of shred below 150mm. Should the EA want to take advantage of putting tyres under interim notifiable (amber list) controls and raise the equivalent of £750k per annum pro rata in notifiable fees, the EA would have the full support of the tyre recycling industry.

The TRA stands ready to support your drive along the path to the circular economy, a zero-waste future that will also allow UK tyre recyclers to thrive and contribute to our sustainable future.



Tyre Recovery Association  
PO Box 13379  
Billericay  
Essex  
CM12 2GY

T: **07932 702173**  
E: **office@tyrerecovery.org.uk**  
W: **www.tyrerecovery.org.uk**

We look forward to your prompt response and decisive action on a matter that can no longer be ignored.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Taylor".

Peter Taylor OBE  
Secretary General