

Significant intervention by Senedd Environmental Committee

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The Senedd Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee ('the Committee') wrote to the First Minister of Wales recently to warn that there are "significant" and "unacceptable" environmental governance gaps in post-Brexit Wales, with the nation at risk of having the weakest protections in all of Western Europe. The letter came after the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales had given evidence to the Committee.

The letter states: "There are significant and unacceptable gaps in Wales' environmental governance arrangements that must be addressed as a matter of priority. The interim measures were supposed to provide time for the Welsh Government to develop and establish new, permanent governance arrangements, specifically an Environment Commission to oversee the implementation of environmental law."

Another letter sent in June by Green groups echoed the sentiments of the Committee, adding Wales can "ill afford" to fall behind in matters of environmental protection. According to the NGOs, one in six of the nation's species is at risk of being lost, and more than 1,600 people in Wales die prematurely each year due to air pollution.

The impact of the pandemic on the Welsh Government does not appear to have been considered by the Committee as a significant factor in the lack of progress it perceives the Welsh Government has made.

"We recognise the challenge of developing robust, effective and enduring governance arrangements that meet Wales' needs. But, 15 months into the interim measures, we have seen no evidence that any progress has been made."

The Committee clearly wants to see progress being made and no doubt will continue to monitor how the Welsh Ministers react to their letter, including bringing forward the necessary Welsh environmental legislation.

If you have any environmental governance matters you would like to discuss with the team, please contact [Ben Standing](#) or [Tim Edds](#).

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