# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Environmental Principles and Governance Post European Union Exit Consultation** |
| **DATE** | **17 July 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring we continue to not only maintain our environmental standards but build upon these with no reduction in our environmental legislation.

In April, I declared a climate emergency to send a clear signal, we are committed to tackling climate issues before it is too late. Our approach in the Environment (Wales) Act and our Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act provides us with a legislative framework to help us address the threats, from the effects of climate change, and from the decline in biodiversity. Our legislation is already recognised as world leading, by putting sustainable development and the environment at the heart of decision-making, it recognises the interdependencies between our climate and our environment and we are committed to continuing our holistic approach.

Our commitment to maintaining and enhancing our natural resources was enshrined in the Environment (Wales) Act, drawn from international best practice, it introduced a progressive approach, which recognises the health of our natural resources is not only essential to the environment, but also important for the well-being of both current and future generations. These two Acts provide a coherent base and overarching context within which we can begin to address the environmental governance gaps arising from the UK’s exit from the EU. As a Government, we are committed to addressing these gaps.

In March, I launched the Welsh Government’s consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance Post European Union Exit. The consultation marked the beginning of an ongoing conversation with our stakeholders on how we can provide a coherent, integrated governance framework for Wales post EU membership, in a way which delivers our commitments to no reduction in citizens’ rights and enhances our reputation for high standards.

The consultation has been well received by stakeholders, who have welcomed the open invitation to feed in their views and the commitments we have made, and will continue to make to address the governance gaps.

We have also sparked the interest of the wider public with two active campaigns putting forward in the region of 2,000 responses, a clear indication of the regard the people of Wales have for our natural resources and our shared determination to maintain and enhance them for our long-term well-being and prosperity.

I am grateful to Professor Robert Lee of Birmingham University Law School who has chaired a series of workshops to discuss the consultation, providing an independent forum to generate innovative thinking on the best approach for Wales.

In August, I will be publishing a summary of consultation responses. Addressing the governance gaps is a complex matter, which requires careful, collective consideration. Building on our collaborative consultative approach, I have convened a task group of key stakeholders to work with us to further develop the details of the environmental governance structure for Wales. The group began their work this week and will report regularly to my Brexit Roundtable.