

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

Second Delegated Legislation Committee

DRAFT ECODESIGN FOR ENERGY-RELATED
PRODUCTS AND ENERGY INFORMATION
REGULATIONS 2021

Tuesday 8 June 2021

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Saturday 12 June 2021

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: DAME ANGELA EAGLE

Bradshaw, Mr Ben (<i>Exeter</i>) (Lab)	† Rimmer, Ms Marie (<i>St Helens South and Whiston</i>) (Lab)
Caulfield, Maria (<i>Lewes</i>) (Con)	Rutley, David (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)
Fletcher, Mark (<i>Bolsover</i>) (Con)	Slaughter, Andy (<i>Hammersmith</i>) (Lab)
Harris, Rebecca (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)	Thomson, Richard (<i>Gordon</i>) (SNP)
Jones, Mr Kevan (<i>North Durham</i>) (Lab)	† Tomlinson, Michael (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)
Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma (<i>South Shields</i>) (Lab)	† Trevelyan, Anne-Marie (<i>Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth</i>)
Mak, Alan (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)	† Whitehead, Dr Alan (<i>Southampton, Test</i>) (Lab)
† Mann, Scott (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)	Nicholas Taylor, <i>Committee Clerk</i>
Morris, James (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)	
Pursglove, Tom (<i>Corby</i>) (Con)	† attended the Committee

Second Delegated Legislation Committee

Tuesday 8 June 2021

[DAME ANGELA EAGLE *in the Chair*]

Draft Ecodesign for Energy-Related Products and Energy Information Regulations 2021

9:25 am

The Chair: Before we begin, I remind Members of the social distancing regulations. Spaces available to Members are clearly marked et cetera. I am sure you know all about this.

The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the draft Ecodesign for Energy-Related Products and Energy Information Regulations 2021.

The regulations were laid before the House on 20 April. Ecodesign policies regulate products that consume energy when in use, such as household white goods, by setting minimum energy performance standards to increase their energy efficiency. Ecodesign can also require resource-efficiency measures that seek to make products more repairable and recyclable. Energy-labelling policies are intended to provide clear and consistent information about a product's energy usage to consumers at the point of purchase, encouraging the uptake of more energy-efficient products. That results in lower energy usage and savings for consumers and businesses on their energy bills. As a whole, we estimate that ecodesign and energy-labelling policies in Great Britain will save £75 on consumers' energy bills and 8 megatonnes of carbon dioxide in 2021, equivalent to the average yearly carbon emissions from the electricity use of 12 million homes.

The statutory instrument introduces new ecodesign requirements for welding equipment, electric motors, household washing machines, washer-driers and dishwashers, domestic and commercial refrigeration and electronic displays placed on the market in Great Britain. These requirements will raise the minimum energy efficiency of products sold in Britain, reducing energy usage and saving consumers and businesses money on their energy bills. They introduce new obligations on manufacturers to make the products easier to recycle and repair. Consumers will be entitled to access spare parts to repair their appliances, with a wider range available to professional repairers, enabling them to support consumers to keep appliances in use for longer and therefore reducing electrical waste.

The statutory instrument will also introduce an energy label for commercial refrigeration, which will provide information to businesses when purchasing an appliance, helping them to understand and compare the energy consumption of different products. That will encourage businesses to opt for more energy-efficient fridges, helping to cut down on the energy used and associated carbon emissions of commercial refrigeration, for example in supermarkets. By setting ambitious boundaries for the

A to G classes on the energy label, innovation will be spurred on as manufacturers compete to achieve the highest energy-efficiency ratings. Through introducing the ecodesign and energy-labelling requirements, we will ensure that we maintain high product standards in Great Britain.

The requirements introduced by the statutory instrument will contribute to savings of approximately 1.7 megatonnes of carbon dioxide by 2050. They will help to reduce the quantity of electrical waste reaching landfill each year and will ensure a common set of product standards with Northern Ireland, facilitating trade across the Irish sea. A public consultation was conducted between September and November last year, with feedback showing strong support for implementing these requirements among manufacturing bases and, of course, environmental campaign groups.

In conclusion, the measures introduced by the SI are aligned with the Government's carbon budget and net-zero targets, and they will provide greener choices for consumers and businesses to save money on energy bills, as well as encouraging long-term product innovation. I commend the statutory instrument to the Committee.

9.29 am

Dr Alan Whitehead (Southampton, Test) (Lab): I should inform the Committee before we go any further that, as far as the Opposition is concerned, we think ecodesign is a good thing. Where would we be without those labels on the sides of the televisions that we order on the internet, only to realise when they arrive that they are not as energy-efficient as we thought they were? They do tell us what we have to do the next time.

The whole ecodesign and energy-labelling arrangements have been a great success and, as the Minister mentioned, have contributed positively to carbon saving and the use of more efficient products over the period. However, as she will also know, we have 150 pages of various iterations of ecodesign across a range of products, services and arrangements and a whole series of metrics relating to ecodesign that go much further than just the labelling on particular products.

I want to ask the Minister briefly about the process whereby the regulations have come into place and her intention for that process in future. Of course, she will know that the regulations are not new, but an update of previous regulations that applied across the EU. They are therefore a wholesale translation of ecodesign regulations that referred originally to EU sources and now relate to UK arrangements. They are, with the exception of about two or three words, exactly aligned with the regulations that apply in the EU. However, hon. Members will note that they do not apply in Northern Ireland, which is applying the regulations—which are the same regulations—under EU, not UK arrangements. That potentially works well because they are exactly aligned, but only, as far as UK arrangements are concerned, if the alignment continues.

My first question to the Minister is therefore whether it is her intention for the regulations to continue to align closely with EU regulations. The explanatory notes suggest that there will be a review of the regulations in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027—different products will be reviewed on different dates. Are those review dates aligned with the EU's review dates or are they UK-only? I think the Minister understands that if we review our

regulations on a date that is not the same as the EU's review date, there is the possibility of non-alignment at particular stages. That could cause difficulties through having different regulations in two different parts of the UK. Not only that, but non-alignment could affect manufacturers' costs and arrangements relating to the transit of products between the UK and EU member states. I would therefore welcome a statement from the Minister that she intends to continue with the alignment for the products we are considering, and that review dates will continue to be aligned with dates for any changes that may be made in the EU for those products.

I raise a slight concern that although we are introducing ecodesign regulations on welding equipment and commercial refrigeration for the first time, they relate to Commission regulations, which were passed some time ago. However, we do not have any guidance on what standards should be used

"until designated standards are available."

There are no existing regulations in the UK or a transitional method of measurement, yet we are expecting suppliers, as stated in the explanatory memorandum,

"to use the best available standards".

When will the guidance notes on what standards should be used be available, and does the Minister expect any problems related to the rather jury-rigged system we will have under the regulations for the time being?

I suppose the final question is, why are the regulations not there? We have had plenty of time to get them in, but we still have not done so. I would guess that that will be at least a slight inconvenience to industry, and I hope that the Minister can clarify the situation to provide a little regulatory certainty for the industries affected by these two new areas of ecodesign regulation.

9.36 am

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: To cover the specific point about the review date, I am afraid that I do not have that information to hand so I will make sure that we share that with the hon. Gentleman so that he has clarity on how that matches up with whatever the EU timetable is. As he says, the regulations are obviously Great Britain regulations and we will continue to work together closely, and as there are changes they will always be made in a way that upholds the Northern Ireland protocol. We are very clear on that.

Perhaps importantly for the hon. Gentleman's wider point, later in the year we will publish an energy-related products policy framework that will set out our ambitions

as part of that narrative. We have set out the energy White Paper to demonstrate those product methodologies for maximising carbon and energy reduction across all energy-related products. As that rolls out, it will give us the opportunity to build on the forward look for all those products and quite possibly others as we think holistically through every part of our economy and where we want to help consumers and businesses. This is a particularly important piece in helping businesses to think much more proactively about how they can help their businesses get closer to net zero within their own commitments. I hope that this will help to drive that forward.

In March, we reinstated the simple A to G scale to help provide more accurate information. Those new labels are an improvement on the old system, and as the hon. Gentleman says the challenge is to train everybody to think about looking at that before they make a purchase so that they are not disappointed when they do not get the right one. I had that challenge just the other day, Dame Angela, trying to buy a new fridge. It was surprisingly difficult to compare and contrast and find the best one for the relevant price. All this framework is about making things as easy and directly accessible for the consumer as possible so that we really can help people to do their part in helping us to get to net zero.

I hope that barring the question on dates, on which I will return to the hon. Gentleman, I have shown these regulations will help achieve setting those higher product standards and increasing resource efficiency. That is better for the environment and, of course, much better for consumers who are helping us with all of this to meet that net-zero challenge. We will be pushing for household appliances to be more energy and resource-efficient. Consumers will pay less on their energy bills and, importantly, can expect to have access to spare parts for their appliances if something goes wrong. That is a really important shift to ensure that when something goes wrong it is not thrown on the scrap heap but can easily be fixed and much more life can be got out of the whole product.

I underline the fact that this statutory instrument brings tangible benefits for consumers and businesses and helps us to secure those important carbon savings to help us towards our carbon-budget net-zero targets. I commend it to the Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

9.40 am

Committee rose.

