

Regulator calls on businesses to do more to protect the environment

A new report shows the majority of England's regulated businesses are working to protect the environment and support prosperity, although more work is needed to reduce serious pollution incidents and illegal waste activity.

Published today, the Environment Agency's (EA) annual [Regulating for People, Environment and Growth \(RPEG\) report](#) reveals that greenhouse gas emissions from industry have been cut by half in the last 10 years and compliance rates of energy efficiency and emissions trading schemes are above 98%.

It also shows 92% of operators demonstrated good compliance with their environmental permit conditions. A record 72% of the waste produced by activities with permits was recovered, and high levels of bathing water quality have been maintained.

The report gives an overview of the regulatory performance of all businesses with environmental permits in England and shows the effectiveness of the EA's regulatory approach.

Earlier this month, [the EA set itself the aim of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030](#) – ensuring that its own activities and its supply chain are taking as much carbon out of the atmosphere as it is putting into it.

Gillian Pratt, Deputy Director at the Environment Agency, said:

Our regulation is supporting a healthier environment and safer communities. The majority of businesses we regulate are well run. But all businesses must make improvements to ensure their operations help protect the environment and local communities.

Waste crime continues to blight communities, cause environmental harm, and undercut legitimate business. Businesses need to do more to manage their risks and reduce pollution incidents.

The EA continues to target those who flout the rules with enforcement action, including prosecution. In 2018, the prosecutions brought by the EA resulted in almost £2.8 million in fines for environmental offences.

Despite good progress, the report highlights the need for businesses to do more to safeguard the environment as the number of serious pollution incidents and illegal waste sites increases.

The report highlights:

- there were 533 serious pollution incidents in 2018, 14% fewer than 10 years ago, but 27% more than in 2017

- 912 illegal waste sites were closed down by the EA last year, a 12% increase on previous year
- 896 new illegal waste sites were discovered last year, blotting the country's landscapes and undercutting legitimate businesses

[The full report is available on the Environment Agency's website.](#)