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Cross-border waste dumpers targeted

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Roadside stops were held at Gretna as part of the initiative

Roadside stops have been held at Gretna as part of efforts to tackle waste being illegally brought across the border and dumped in Scotland.

The initiative is being spearheaded by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa).

It said waste crime was estimated to cost the UK economy about £600m a year.

Sepa said that included the illegal transport and dumping of waste in Scotland by hauliers coming from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The latest stops - in tandem with police and other environment agencies - were part of the £3.8m Life Smart waste project co-funded by the European Union.

Kath McDowall, unit manager at Sepa's waste crime investigations team, said intelligence gathered showed cross-border dumping was an issue.



She said "several companies" were known to be involved and many were under investigation for criminal offences.

"There are also indications of serious and organised crime group involvement in the transport, sale and disposal of illegal waste - so it's vital that we work with partners across the UK to tackle this issue," she added.

"As Scotland's environmental regulator, Sepa works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and we are clear that compliance is non-negotiable.

"Waste crime will not be tolerated and Sepa will, with its partners, pursue and take proportionate action against those who seek to profit from waste crime."

One of the issues being highlighted has been the impact of metal theft.

"When criminals strip and re-sell metal from railways, utility companies and properties, it can cause damage and disruption to lives and businesses that far exceeds the costs of the commodity stolen," said Det Insp Arlene Wilson of the British Transport Police.



"Hauliers may be committing an offence by transporting or illegally disposing of metal or other waste without the required permissions and this could leave them liable to prosecution and operational sanctions.

"Criminals often believe they can escape the law by crossing the border into another jurisdiction."

Illegal activity

However, she said that was not the case and they were determined to tackle the problem.

Lynsae Tulloch, of the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, said that illegal dumping was a "blight" on the environment, communities and businesses.

"Critically, criminals involved in the illegal movement and disposal of waste are diverting income from legitimate operators, depriving them of turnover," she said.

"Some haulage firms are also being used to transport waste to disposal sites - without them even knowing they're involved in illegal activity."

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