

IWMA calls for national consumer campaign to support higher recycling rates

Supports new environmental levy being introduced from 1 September in context of EU early warning that Ireland is likely to miss 2025 recycling target

3rd August 2023 A new environmental levy being introduced by Government from 1 September will only achieve its desired impact if supported by a consumer awareness campaign, The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) said today.

In order to increase recycling rates, the Government is currently finalising regulations that will introduce a €10 levy on all municipal waste that is not recycled, but is subject to treatments including energy recovery in incineration, gasification, pyrolysis and co-incineration plants, whether in Ireland or abroad.

The levy is designed to incentivise households and businesses to segregate their waste more effectively, reducing both the amount of waste being sent to landfill and reducing the cross-contamination of waste so that higher quality recyclables can be recovered for recycling. The IWMA supports all efforts to increase recycling.

There is an existing levy of €75 per tonne on waste that is disposed in landfills and that levy is also due to increase by €10, to €85 per tonne, from 1st September 2023.

Conor Walsh, Secretary of the IWMA said; "Ireland is not on track to meet the EU 2025 target of 55% recycling of municipal wastes; currently just 41% of municipal waste is recycled. In that context, we support the Government's efforts to encourage better segregation of wastes in households and in businesses. However, we need to see all agencies – Government, local authorities, waste operators and other organisations such as Repak and WEEE compliance schemes come together to actively promote a national effort to increase our recycling rates. Introducing this levy on waste will not achieve its desired effect without a national consumer awareness campaign".

Mr Walsh said a quick win in increasing Ireland's national recycling rates would be increased use of brown bins in Ireland, particularly in commercial premises. "Many commercial premises are obliged to have and to use brown bins. The IWMA encourages all commercial premises to request a brown bin from their waste collection company if they do not already have one and to use that bin effectively. We hope to see increased use of brown bins among householders too. From the end of this year all households will be entitled to a brown bin and it will be illegal to place food waste in the residual bin. Increased use of brown bins in Ireland could boost our recycling rate by up to 10%. Other IWMA initiatives would then push us beyond 55% and heading for the 2030 recycling target of 60%."

Mr Walsh added that currently it is illegal in urban areas to place food waste in residual bins. "Few householders realise this fact and it points again to the need for a concerted public awareness campaign driven by Government".

He appealed to householders and commercial premises to put the correct waste in the correct bin and advised householders and business owners to check out the website www.mywaste.ie which provides a lot of information that will help people with finding recycling outlets for the bulk of their waste.

Ends.