

From: Minister Naughten [mailto:Minister.Naughten@DCCAIE.gov.ie]
Sent: Tuesday 31 July 2018 12:17
To: Colm Murphy <cmurphy@SDUBLINCOCO.ie>
Subject: Re: Bin charges

Ref: CG-2018 74

Dear Mr. Murphy,

I would like to apologise for the delay in responding. The charges applied by waste management companies are matters for those companies and their customers, subject to compliance with all applicable environmental and other relevant legislation, including contract and consumer legislation.

Notwithstanding the above, I established a Household Waste Collection Price Monitoring Group (PMG) last year to monitor pricing developments for household waste collection services during the phasing out of flat rate fees. The PMG has met each month since September 2017 and has considered eight months of pricing data trends. The PMG has indicated that, in the vast majority of cases to date, prices have remained stable. Detailed data on the price offerings for the months of December to May is available on www.dccae.gov.ie

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) is also currently conducting a separate study on the operation of the household waste collection market which it will complete in 2018.

The results from the PMG are being monitored, and in conjunction with the study being undertaken by the CCPC, will provide an evidence base for future decisions in relation to the need for further regulation of the waste market.

In terms of environmental requirements, the charges applied should encourage householders to divert waste from the residual or general waste bin. For example, it would be expected that charges for the general waste bin would be higher than charges, if any, applied to the recycle bin.

The Government has funded a range of measures to support better recycling and reduce contamination of waste in an effort to improve quality - which will in turn facilitate the development of indigenous recycling - including:

- a national, standardised list of items that can go into the recycle bin has been established, which is available at <http://recyclinglistireland.ie/>;
- this standardised list has been supported by a public education campaign run by the regional waste management authorities, comprising radio advertisements, social media, billboards/posters, etc., to promote the new list; and,
- a 'master recycling' programme, also run by the regional waste management authorities, in partnership with environmental NGOs, to roll out 650 workshops across the country training recycling ambassadors to bring the recycling message and understanding to a wide variety of communities;

In addition, I have also provided Government funding to support and encourage better separation of waste through a number of initiatives such as:

- the Stop Food Waste programme www.stopfoodwaste.ie, which is implemented under the Environmental Protection Agency's National Waste Prevention Programme and is aimed at both householders and businesses, providing comprehensive information about the food that is wasted and how to prevent this, and,
- the development of a website www.brownbins.ie to provide the public with the information required to use the organic bin appropriately, including advice on the optimal methods for effective collection and storage of food waste.

Ireland has supported the adoption of a set of ambitious measures to make EU waste legislation fit for the future, as part of the EU's wider circular economy policy. The new recycling and landfilling targets set a credible and ambitious path for better waste management in Europe. They included a new recycling rate of 55% for plastic packaging waste by 2035, which will help drive real progress towards the circular economy.

In January 2018, the EU Commission published the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy. The strategy focuses on plastics production and use and sets a goal of ensuring all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030. I recently wrote to the European Commissioner with responsibility for the environment to welcome the EU plastics strategy. I assured him Ireland fully embraced the ambitions of the new strategy. I asked the Commission to focus, in particular, on the most difficult non-recyclable plastics such as soft wrapping, film and single use items.

I was pleased, therefore, to note this week that the Commission has published a further proposal for dealing with the ten single-use plastic products and fishing gear that together account for 70% of the marine litter in Europe. The proposal includes:

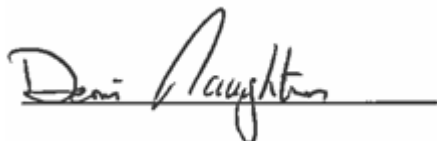
- a ban on certain plastic products;
- targets for reducing the use of certain plastics; and
- obligations for producers to help cover the costs of waste management and clean up.

I am urging the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers to consider these proposals as soon as possible so that they can be implemented in Ireland and other Member States. Before this week's Commission proposal, it would have been illegal for individual Member States to take actions to ban packaging or interfere with the EU internal market. Now, all 28 Member States will be able to move as one to tackle plastic waste.

Nevertheless, in advance the European bans and restrictions coming into place, I am considering what financial incentives or penalties I can introduce in Ireland, in the interim, to tackle the use of the single use plastic items identified by the Commission in a way that is compatible with EU legislation.

I am looking forward to bringing forward practical solutions and a package of measures along with my government colleagues responsible for marine environment and fisheries, that will work in an Irish context.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Denis Naughton", is written over a horizontal line.

Denis Naughten, T.D.
Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment