

International Examples of Policies Applied to In-Store Packaging

Maria Kelleher
Kelleher Environmental
Toronto's Packaging Waste
Reduction Forum
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Presentation Outline

- Plastic Bag Policies
- Irish Plastic Bag Levy – 2008 Update
- Take Out Food Packaging Policies
- Asian Examples

Policies Applied to Plastic Bags

- Options generally:
 - Bans
 - Levies
 - Recycling Ordinances

Australian Plastic Bag Efforts

- Comprehensive analysis of options by Australian Government in 2002
- Voluntary industry led approach had not achieved target by 2007
- Lack of agreement for Australia/New Zealand at April, 2008 meeting
 - No national levy for Australia
 - South Australia to ban plastic bags January, 2009
 - Victoria announced pilot levy 10-25 cents in 2008

Plastic Bag Levies

- **Ireland**
 - levy is oldest (2002) with longest track record of data on impacts
- **South Africa**
 - plastic bag litter referred to as “new national flower”
 - 3 cent per bag levy (2003)
 - funds used for clean-up and to promote recycling and reuse
 - Require all bags to be at least 24 microns thick

Irish Plastic Bag Levy Background 1998 to 2001

- 1997 –Coalition Government elected
 - Election promise regarding plastic bags
- Consultants report (1998) suggested levy of 2 cents
- Minister considered 15 cent levy more effective
 - Sufficiently high to give most consumers “pause for thought”
- 2001 Legislation established Environment Fund to which levy proceeds would accrue
 - Exclusively support waste recycling, litter and other beneficial environmental initiatives
 - Landfill Tax also deposited to Environment Fund

Implementation of the Levy 2001-2002

- Draft regulations Sept 2001
- Final regs signed by Minister December, 2001
 - Commencement 3 months later
- 6 month period (Sept 01 to March 02) to:
 - Change computerized till-roll and accounting systems;
 - Order supplies of Bags for Life
 - Revenue Commissioners put in new computerized system for levy returns
 - January 2002 – retailers given supply of levy return forms

Irish Plastic Bag Levy – 4th March 2002

- 15 cents per plastic bag
 - Applies to all plastic bags, bio-degradable included
- Objectives: reduce wind blown litter and use as education tool with public
- Plastic bags designed for reuse are exempt if the retailer charges at least 70 cents
- Retailers not allowed to absorb cost
 - must collect from the consumer
 - get people to make more environmentally friendly choices and use reusable bags

Exemptions to Irish Plastic Bag Levy

- Bags which contain:
 - Meat, poultry, fish
 - Loose vegetables
 - Confectionary
 - Hot or cold cooked food
 - Ice
 - Small plastic bags and items sold on planes or ships

Irish Plastic Bag Levy Funds

- Retailers designated as collection points
- Retailers remit to Revenue Commissioners the same as VAT
 - Every 3 months, based on inventories of plastic bags
 - Fines for late submissions
- 110 million Euro raised since inception
 - 17.5 million Euro (2005)
 - 20 million Euro (2006)

Impacts of Levy on Plastic Bag Consumption

- Prior to 2002 : 328 bags/cap
- 2003: 21 bags/cap (over 90% reduction)
- 2006: 31 bags/cap
- First half 2007: 33 bags/cap
- Increased to 22 cents 1st July, 2007
 - Govt and Opposition were supportive of 50 cent levy but not permitted by legislation
- Nov 07 - 26 bags/cap

Impacts of Levy on Plastic Bag Litter

- Prior to 2002:5% of visible litter
- 2003: 0.2% of visible litter
- 2006: 0.5% of visible litter
- 2007-2008 data not available
- Wind-blown litter significantly reduced

Enforcement and Prosecutions

- LA enforcement officers follow up on complaints from public
- Retailers given sufficient warning
- Threat of visit from Revenue Commissioners usually sufficient
- Only 3 prosecutions

Public Attitudes Before Levy (1999)

- Most people willing to do something in principle provided it does not inconvenience them or does not require a major effort on their part
- Support for levies low (40% would not be willing to pay levy)

Public Attitudes To Levy (2003)

- 91% of public believe it is a good idea
 - Better for the Environment
 - No plastic bags visible on the street
 - Reusable bags more convenient for holding shopping
- 6% did not like:
 - Missed plastic shopping bags around the house
 - Frustrated when they forgot their reusable bags

What People Use Instead of Plastic Bags

- 90% of shoppers use reusable or long life bags (Bags for Life)
- 6% use cardboard boxes
- 4% buy plastic bags
- 1% other means

Other Materials Targeted by Irish Government

- Chewing Gum
 - Gum Litter Task Force
 - 2 million Euros to P&E Fund
- ATM Receipts
 - Banks supplied bins outside ATM machines
 - Default – no receipt - must ask for receipt
- Fast Food Packaging
 - Still working on options

Litter Bins in Dublin





Plastic Bag Recycling Ordinances

- California AB 2449 (2006) - Sunsets 2013
 - Requires recycling programs at 7,000 stores
 - Label – please recycle this bag
 - Provide reusable bags
 - Reporting requirements to CIWMB
 - Prohibits local governments from imposing fees
- Chicago
 - Stores which earn more than 25% from food and pharmaceuticals must recycle plastic bags
 - Provide reusable, label, etc

Plastic Bag Bans

- City/County of San Francisco (2007)
 - Banned non-biodegradable plastic bags
 - Stores must provide biodegradable plastic, paper or reusable bags
- City of Oakland (2007)
 - Similar to San Francisco but restaurant and fast food exempt
 - Rationale: Negative impacts on environment and wildlife: Consistent with City's policy to reduce reliance on oil: Consistent with AB2449 which encourages the use of reusable bags and reduces single-use bags

Hot Drink and Fast Food Packaging Policies in Asia

- Plastic waste an enormous problem for developing or developed Asian countries
- Many aggressive approaches targeting plastic take-out food packaging in Asia
- Policies include:
 - Material Bans
 - Levies
 - Restrictions

South Korea – “Restricted Use” Policy on Plastic Shopping Bags and Disposable Plastic Tableware

- Plastic Bags 2002-2003
- Fast Food Packaging 2006
- Plastic bag restriction – banned free bags
 - 2002 – public sector establishments
 - 2003 – storefront food and beverage shops and “big 5” (dept stores and shopping malls; bulk discount shops; supermarkets; convenience store and fast food chains)

South Korea – Plastic Disposable Utensils

- Free disposable toothbrushes banned
- Prohibition on using disposable dishware inside
 - Government organizations
 - School cafeterias
- Applied to:
 - Chopsticks, spoons, knives, forks

South Korea Fast Food Packaging Voluntary Agreement (2003)

- Fast food industry (2,846 sq ft or more)
- Coffee shops (1,779 sq ft or more)
- Use reusable cups for products consumed in-store
- Charge deposit on take-out cups
 - 100won (10 cents) for fast food cups
 - 50 won (5 cents) for coffee cups
 - 10% to 40% return rate

Taipei, Taiwan – Two Phase Approach

- Ban on free plastic bags (2003)
 - department stores, shopping malls, hypermarkets, convenience stores fast food restaurants and regular restaurants
 - Levy of NT\$1 to NT\$2 per bag
- 2006 – disposable plastic tableware
 - Eating out part of culture
 - 16 to 18 million people eat at least one meal out every day (pop 23 million)

Taipei, Taiwan Disposable Food Packaging Ban

- 2006 - Ban on using disposable utensils in school cafeterias and government buildings (bowls, chopsticks, plates and spoons)
- Require reusable coffee cups and chopsticks for in-store meals
- Convenience stores – stop offering free disposable eating utensils to customers

Local Tax on Disposable Fast Food Packaging, Kassel (Germany)

- 0.5DM per disposable item on non-reusable dishes and cutlery used at special events, snack bars, restaurants, institutions and homes
- Objective was to switch to washable tableware, or recycle more
 - Replicated in 30 other municipalities including Frankfurt and Dresden
- Challenged by McDonalds, eliminated in 1998

City of Chicago Bottled Water Tax

- January, 2008 - City of Chicago imposed 5 cent non-returnable fee on bottled water containers *to offset costs for disposal and loss of city water revenue*
- Retailers collect and remit tax to city
- April, 2008 – fee increased to 10 cents per bottle
- \$21 million expected revenues
- US Conference of Mayors – resolution on importance of municipal water supplies

In Store Packaging Policy Options

- Plastic Bags - lots of examples, experience at this stage
- Fast food packaging – more challenging, examples starting to appear
- Public support generally high if reasons clearly explained
- Public accept message that reusable is better where practical

Questions

- Maria Kelleher
- mkelleher@kelleherenvironmental.com
- 416-482-7007, ext 21