

# Litter Control Policy in Ireland

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# Presentation Outline

- Legislation and policies in place in Ireland
- New litter control targets (fast food packaging, chewing gum, ATM receipts)
- Current Status of research

# Irish Waste Management Policy Context

- 1997 – Statement of Intent on Environmental Taxation
- Enshrined Polluter Pays Principle for all waste policy development
- Encouraged use of economic instruments to reach environmental goals
- Plastic bag levy introduced in March 2002
- Following success of plastic bag levy, other components of litter targeted

# National Anti-Litter Strategy (1999) & Litter Action Plan (2001)

- Rigorous enforcement
  - More litter wardens
  - More prosecutions
  - Increase number of spot fines
  - Increased focus on “naming and shaming”
- Awareness campaign
- Levy on plastic bags
- Consider economic instruments targeting chewing gum and fast food packaging
  - Provide industry with opportunity to tackle on voluntary basis first

# Irish Plastic Bag Levy

- 15 cent per plastic bag at point of sale
- Generates 10 million euros per year for environmental projects
- Use of plastic bags reduced by 90%
- Plastic bags now 0.3% of litter (compared to 5% in 2002)
- 91% of surveyed residents feel it was a good idea
  - Support for other levies low

# Litter Monitoring Body Carries Out Two Surveys

## Litter Quantification Survey

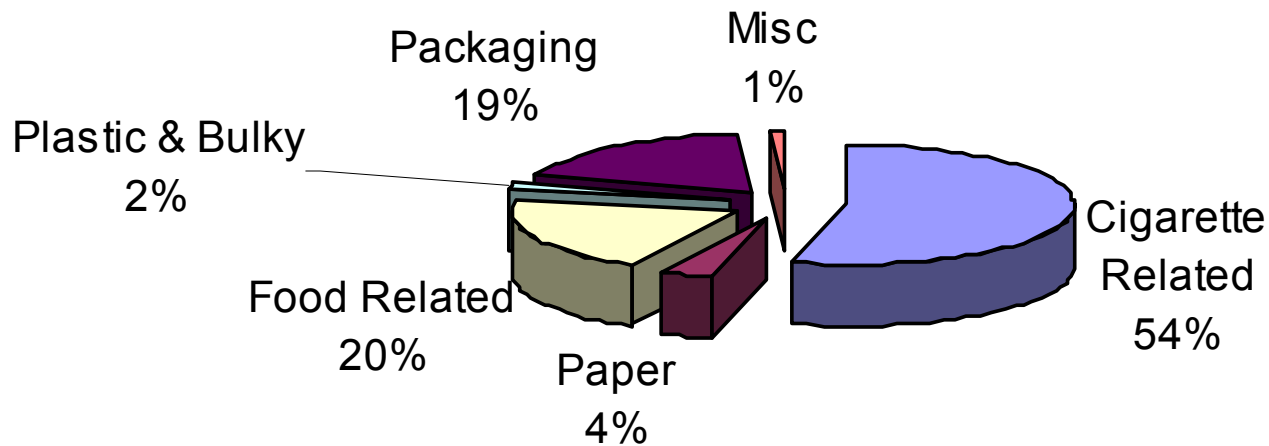
- 8 categories of litter
- Each LA carries out 4-15 surveys along 50 metre stretches of roadway

## Litter Pollution Survey

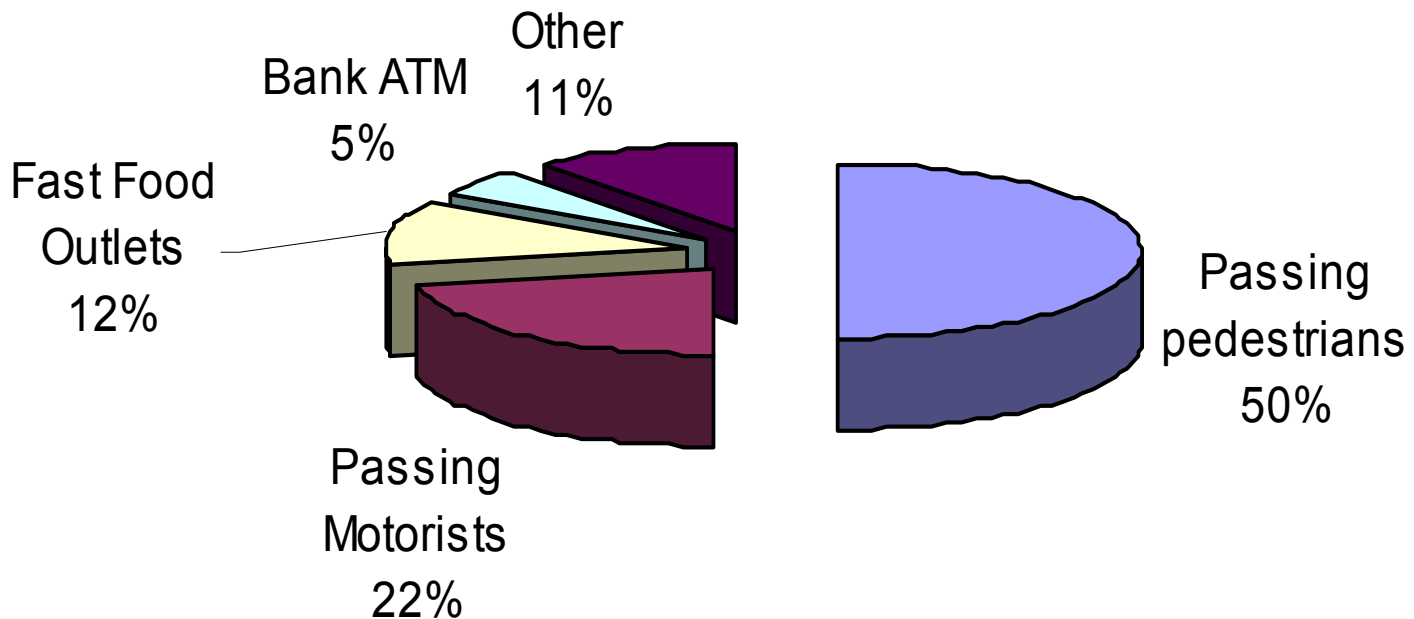
- Extent and severity in survey area

# Composition of Irish Litter, 2003

Litter Composition 2003



# Sources of Litter (Causative Factors)



# June 2003 Press Release

- Fast food packaging, chewing gum and ATM receipts would be targeted through some form of economic instrument

# Detailed Composition of Food Litter

- Chewing Gum 18.49% (TARGET)
- Fast Food Remnants 0.25%
- Other food items 1.09%

# Composition of Packaging Litter

- Plastic packaging 6.63%
- Paper packaging 5.72%
- Takeaway packaging 3.17%  
(TARGET)
- Other packaging 3.52%
- Total packaging 10.04%

# Composition of Paper Litter

- Tissues 0.94%
- Receipts 0.81%
- ATM slips 0.28% (TARGET)
- Other paper items 1.99%
- Total paper litter 4.02%

# Public Attitudes to Litter (2003)

- 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

# Fast food packaging, chewing gum and ATM Receipts

- Goals need to be clearly articulated:
  - Reduce litter
  - Raise revenues
  - Force product change
- Some economic instruments may not be applicable/viable
- Successes with other materials may not be applicable

# Fast Food Packaging

- Most fast food packaging is polystyrene
  - huge source of visible litter
  - can be attributed to generator
  - company name on clamshells, napkins and cups
- Initial flurry of activities in late 1980's in US, based on litter surveys
- New flurry of activity in Asia; some in US and Europe

# Fast Food Packaging - Government Actions

- Bans on particular products
- Taxes on litter generating materials
- Mandatory levies to earmarked or ring-fenced funds

# Product Bans

- PS bans enacted at local level
  - Portland, Oregon; Berkeley and Sonoma County, California; Suffock Cty, NY (first)
- Taiwan and Korea – national ban on disposable plastic tableware
- Bans on sale of mercury thermometers within its borders:
  - Duluth, Minnesota; San Francisco and others (all since 2000)
- Singapore- chewing gum banned in 1992

# Asian Fast Food Packaging Bans

- Plastic waste an enormous problem for developing or developed Asian countries
- Korea, Taiwan, Phillipines, Nepal, China, India all have banned some plastic products
- China – banned PS disposable food containers in 2000
- Nepal – trying to eliminate plastic waste; started with ban on plastic bags
- India – ban on plastic bags ignored
- Phillipines – ban on “disposable packaging” broad

# Taxes and Levies on Fast Food Packaging

- New Jersey Litter Control Fee (updated 2002)
- Florida and Hawaii Advanced Disposal Fee
- Jamaica - levy announced late 2003
- Korea – non-refundable waste treatment charges levied on industry as % of sale price
- Taiwan – recycling fees imposed per kg sold into market
- Local Tax on Disposal of Fast Food Packaging (30 German Municipalities)

# New Jersey Litter Control Fee

- Imposed on manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers on sales of litter generating products
- 0.0225% to 0.03% of previous years receipts, paid March of following year
- Generates about \$10 million per year; used for litter clean-up projects
- Exemptions:
  - Retailers smaller than \$500,000/year sales
  - Restaurants with over 50% in-house meals

# Advanced Disposal Fees

## ■ Florida

- Flat fee on range of containers; exemptions if recycling target met
- Implemented 1993 with sunset clause for 1995
- Raised \$45 million in 1994; \$22 million by 1995 because companies met targets

## ■ Hawaii

- Importers will pay 1.8 cents on each glass container (excluding deposit containers), starting 2004
- Money will be used to pay for glass recycling

# South Korea

- Highly developed and industrialized
- Waste generation increasing
- Three-prong strategy to cover fast food packaging and other materials:
  - Recycling Levies collected from industry
  - Disposal Levies collected from industry
  - Product bans

# Korea – Recycling Fees

- Manufacturers pay fees to “Special Account for Environmental Improvement”
- Manufacturers receive rebates based on recycling levels
- Fee levels made it cheaper not to recycle; redesign of fee structure required

# Korea – Waste Treatment Charges

- “Waste Treatment Charges” levied on products are “difficult to collect, treat or recycle, or likely to render waste management generally difficult”
- Chewing gum – 0.27% of sales price
- Cigarettes - \$0.3US/package
- Plastic
  - polyacetal resin – 0.35% of sales price
  - other plastic – 0.7% of sales price

# Korea – Product Bans

- Restaurants can not use disposable dishware unless they can prove 90% recycling or recovery rate
- Disposable cups, containers and plates restricted in restaurants and cafeterias with floor area larger than 33 sq.m.
- Disposable lunch boxes made of plastic prohibited

# Japan

- Industry recycles materials which municipalities collect; funded through mandatory levies
- Not clear if fast food packaging included
- Fees assessed based on weight sold into market
  - \$0.862US/kg for plastic containers and packages
  - \$0.482US/kg for paper containers and packaging

# Taiwan

- Manufacturers and importers of packaging pay the following fees to a national recycling organization:
  - Foamed polystyrene \$1.18/kg
  - Unfoamed polystyrene \$0.28/kg

# Portland, Oregon PS Ban

- Implemented 1989; still in place
- Cascade Policy Institute analysis 1998
  - Argument that paper cups twice the price of PS cups
  - 3,300 licenced food vendors
  - Impacts about \$3.3-3.9 million/year in opportunity costs

# 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 tablewear, or recycle more
  - Replicated in 30 other municipalities including Frankfurt and Dresden
- Challenged by McDonalds, eliminated in 1998

# McDonalds Voluntary Polystyrene Ban in US

- Moved from PS to paper packaging in the US in 1990 based on consumer protests
- Independent research showed PS better than paper for total lifecycle
- McDonalds maintain ban based on consumer preferences (not environmental considerations)

# Don't Mess With Texas

## 20 year old litter control program

- Litter control program funded by state and leveraged by private \$
  - \$2 million/year from state general revenues
  - \$5 million/year donated by corporate sponsors
- Famous personalities help with ads
- 70% reduction in litter after 6 years
- Reduction in litter after each campaign
- Now design very targeted campaigns

# Don't Mess With Texas

## Litterer Classification

- Gross (7%) – still throw cans, bottles and food wrappers
- Micro (15%) – small items only
- Reformed (16%) – within past three years but not past three months
- Tolerant (14%) – associate with litterers
- Non-Litterers; never mess with Texas
- Future campaigns focused on 16-24 year old smokers who eat fast food and go to bars and parties

# Conclusions from International Policy Research For Irish Government

- Fast food packaging dealt with through either:
  - Product bans or
  - Levies imposed on manufacturer or importer
- Point of sale levies not identified through research
- Voluntary Codes of Practice in UK
- Policy instrument chosen depends on objective (litter reduction, move from PS, or revenue generation)

# Conclusions of International Policy Research For Irish Government

- Most activity on chewing gum and fast food packaging in Asian countries (Taiwan, Korea, China, Japan)
- No specific measures identified which targeted ATM receipts

# Status of New Irish Litter Policies

- Consultations with industry  
November, 2003– various options  
brought forward
- Final report to Irish government  
February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004
- Government decision not public yet