

DICK ROCHE

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RAISING THE ISSUES. GETTING RESULTS. WORKING FOR YOU.

MAKING IRELAND GREENER AND CLEANER

Dear Constituent,

In the last 9 years Fianna Fáil in Government has implemented a whole series of successful environmental initiatives. Huge investments have been made in waste infrastructure. There has been a dramatic increase in recycling facilities. Kerbside collection in its infancy in 1998 is being rapidly "rolled out".

New water and sewerage treatment facilities have been funded. The law has been strengthened particularly in the area of illegal dumping.

With the active cooperation of the Irish people these policies have brought about major and positive changes. Vast tonnages of waste have been diverted from landfill. There has been a huge increase in waste recycling.

The scourge of illegal dumping has been addressed by a whole series of legislative changes and by the investment of time and funding in investigating offences and bringing criminals to Court.

Ireland has also shown leadership in a number of key areas. The smoking ban, an important health and environmental policy, is being copied worldwide. The innovative tax on plastic bags has dramatically decreased the level of plastic litter. Ireland is to the forefront in the recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment.

Other initiatives are also underway, including a new approach to taking scrap cars off our roads. Policies to meet our Climate Change Kyoto targets are becoming fully operational. Ambitious policies for renewable energy and for biodegradable waste have been set.

As in so many other areas while other Parties talk about environmental policies, Fianna Fáil in Government delivers.

Le gach dea ghúí



Dick Roche, TD

Minister for the Environment,
Heritage & Local Government

You can also contact Dick by phone, fax or e-mail at any of the following addresses:

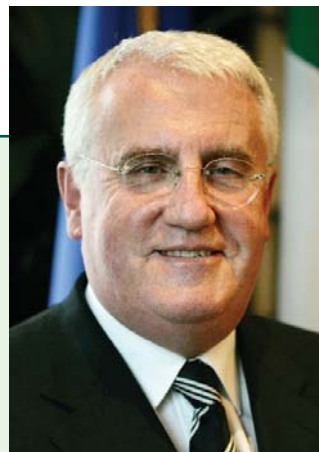
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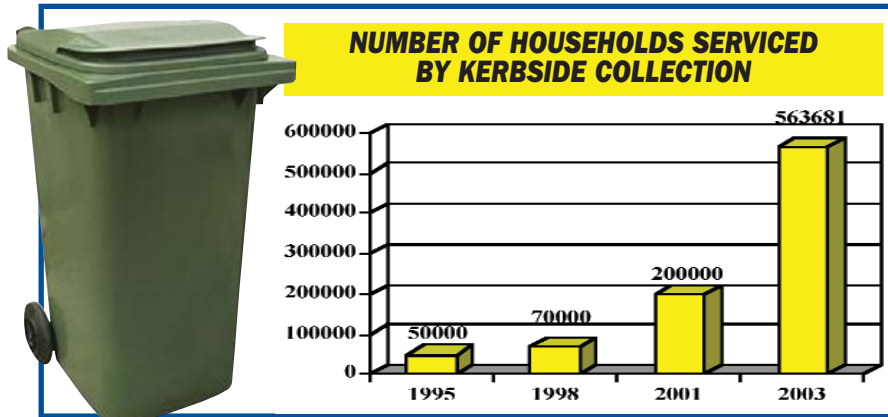
 **FIANNA FÁIL**
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Changing our ways: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

In 1998 the policy document Changing Our Ways set out ambitious targets for waste management. The response from the Irish public and industry to the challenge of dealing with waste has been magnificent. Many of the targets set in it have been exceeded. Ireland is becoming a Recycling Society. In 1998 only 9% of municipal waste was recycled now the figure is over 34%. We have already reached our target for 2015. Almost 60% of packaging waste is now being recycled. Less than 15% was recycled in 1997. We are well ahead of target in this area.

The Government is firmly of the view that we must make it easier for households and businesses to recycle and to reduce. We are funding the roll out of segregated waste collection services.

Under Fine Gael & Labour only 70,000 households had kerbside collection. By 2003 that number had been increased to over 560,000. The number is now set to grow rapidly.



Creating proper facilities for recycling

If people are being encouraged to recycle, facilities have to be made available.

In 1997 there were just over 800 bring centres, where bottles, paper, old clothing, cans and other recyclables could be deposited. Under this Government the number of bring banks has more than doubled to nearly 2000 bring banks and the number is growing.

This Government has invested heavily in Recycling Centres. When Fine Gael & Labour left office we had only 35 Civic Amenity Centres. We now have almost 80 and, again, the number is growing.

The Air We Breathe

There can be no more important initiative than cleaning up the very air we breathe. The World Health Organisation has concluded that indoor air pollution is responsible for 1.5 million deaths every year. When Minister Micheal Martin announced a ban on smoking in the workplace there were howls of protest from vested interests. But the Fianna Fáil led Government stuck to its policy. The results have been dramatic. Workers are no longer exposed to the threat to their health. It's now possible to go out for a night without coming home with clothes and hair reeking of cigarette smoke.

Now other Governments are copying the Irish initiative. It is nice when Ireland leads the world in an environmental initiative.

Plastic Bags

The hugely successful levy on plastic bags is another example of a highly successful environmental initiative by Fianna Fáil in Government. Before 2002 an incredible 1.2 billion plastic bags were used in Ireland every year. The levy has cut use by over 90%.

The environmental benefits have been huge. Plastic bags were one of the worst polluters of the countryside. Bags were dumped into landfill in huge numbers. A standard plastic bag can take 1000 years to breakdown in the earth.

The levy has also produced a stream of income to fund environmental policies. In 2005 the levy yielded €17.5 million. This money was used to fund recycling centres, bring banks, environmental awareness campaigns, and for the enforcement of environmental legislation.

Renewable Energy

The Government aims to double the level of electricity generated from renewable sources over the next four years. Minister Dempsey has announced a set of new initiatives to increase production of electricity from renewable energy technologies to 13.2% by 2010 recently. The additional capacity from renewables will

- supply the electricity needs of 260,000 homes,
- reduce Ireland's dependency on imported fuels,
- improve Ireland's national trade balance,
- create jobs in construction and operations
- cut greenhouse emissions by over 1 million tonnes.

New Planning Guidelines for wind turbines are to be published by Minister Roche shortly.



We now have 50 individual wind farms with 574MW of wind capacity connected to the grid and with a further 630MW fully consented with signed connection agreements, we are well on our way to achieving our 2010 renewable electricity targets of 13.2% of electricity consumed.

Climate Change : Meeting Our Targets

Ireland is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Kyoto Protocol, the agreement aimed at addressing the problem of global warming.

To meet our Kyoto targets we must cut down on greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure that our carbon emissions target by 2012 is no more than 13% above our 1990 level. This is a big challenge for a growing economy.

To meet our targets the top 109 Irish energy using companies and organisations have been set a target for carbon emissions. The State is responsible for the balance of the economy including agriculture, transport and the carbon emissions of the general public.

Ireland's unprecedented economic and population growth has increased the challenge in meeting these targets. In 2001, Ireland's emissions were 31% above the 1990 level. By 2004 however this had reduced by 8 percentage points to 23% - despite economic growth over this period of around 15%. This means that while Ireland's economy was booming and there was more of the economic activity (including a major building boom and a rise in the number of cars) carbon emissions did not rise as dramatically as they might have - we had 'decoupled' economic growth and carbon emissions.

A whole raft of policies has been put in place to steer Ireland towards the Kyoto targets. These include: -

- €65 million in Budget 2006 for renewable technologies.
- New Building Regulations setting energy ratings for buildings.
- A Mineral Oil Tax relief scheme to assist the biofuel sector
- Additional support for sustainable biomass
- A €27 m. grant package for alternative heating systems for homes and businesses.

The best way to meet our Kyoto responsibilities is by introducing practical policies and measures that encourages everyone to play their part. The Green Party proposal to impose punitive additional taxes on motorists, on transport operators, on home heating oils, through 'carbon taxes' is not the way forward.



Cleaning Up Our Waters



84 blue flags awarded in 2006

This Government has invested on an unprecedented scale in environmental infrastructure. Over €2.5 billion was invested in major new water and sewerage facilities since 2000 with €5 billion proposed to be invested in the current 2005 - 2007 Programme. The money has been used wisely. The impact of the investment has been dramatic. In 1997 when Fine Gael & Labour left office less than 20% of Irish wastewater met the EU standards. By 2005 - almost 95% of wastewater meets the EU Standard.

As a result of Government investments Dublin in 2005 became one of the few capital cities in the world with a Blue Flag beach in its metropolitan area and in Cork, the Lee swim was staged in the city centre for the first time in 50 years, That's Progress!

Waste Electrical Equipment

ANOTHER MAJOR IRISH SUCCESS

The United Nations has labelled electrical and electronic waste as one of the world's fastest growing and most dangerous waste streams. The European Union was so concerned about this that it enacted the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment Directive in 2002. In August 2005, Ireland became one of only 3 EU Member States to fully implement this Directive.

At the time Opposition Parties attacked the Government and said that the initiative would not work. The Labour Party called for the initiative to be dropped. Again the Government held its nerve. The policy has been more successful than anyone could have imagined:

- **In less than 7 months 14,500 tonnes of Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment were collected for recycling**
- **This included 11,000 tonnes of fridges and freezers and over 1,000 tonnes of old TVs.**
- **This is the equivalent to an annual collection rate of 6.7Kg per person, way ahead of our EU target of 4Kg per person by 2008.**

As a result of this Government initiative Ireland is to the fore in terms of recycling waste electrical and electronic equipment and we are now seeing major investments being made in a whole new recycling industry.

Bio Fuels



Minister Roche at the launch of a new bio-fuel product

Ireland must break its dependence on imported fossil fuels. A start was made in Budget 2006 when the Mineral Oil Tax Relief Scheme was introduced to help the bio fuel sector. When fully operational this will support the use and production of 163 million litres of bio fuels per year. Dublin Bus is now operating its first bio diesel buses. The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Cork City Council are now operating vehicles on bio diesel.

Illegal Dumping

Long before becoming Minister for the Environment Dick Roche campaigned against illegal dumping. As Minister Dick further strengthened the law by issuing a Policy Direction under the Waste Management Act. This set out the arrangements that must be followed in the clean up of sites where waste has been dumped illegally. It also encourages an intensification of action against illegal waste activity. Under the Waste Management Act a person found guilty of illegal dumping can be fined up to €15m and can be jailed for up to 10 years. Funding and other support has been made available to local authorities to help them to take effective action in this area.

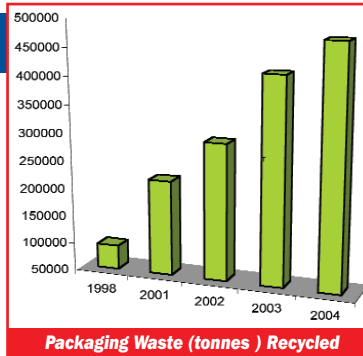
After years of problems there are now real signs of progress. The Environmental Protection Agency concluded recently that large scale illegal dumping and cross border dumping has been stopped.

In the case of Wicklow where illegal dumping became a national scandal the Government brought the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation in to help with the investigation. A number of criminal actions have commenced in the Courts and other cases are pending.



Packaging Waste

The recycling of packaging waste has been another Irish environmental success story. When this Fianna Fáil led Government took over from Fine Gael & Labour in 1997 only 14% of our packaging waste was recycled. Since then we have seen huge improvements. In 2001 we met a 25% recycling target set by the EU. Our target for 2005 was 50% and this was exceeded in 2004 when over 56% of packaging waste was recovered and recycled.



Construction & Demolition Waste



Construction and Demolition activity generates a lot of waste. The Government wants to make sure that this waste is dealt with responsibly. In partnership with the construction industry and other stakeholders, best practice guidelines in this area are being finalised to support recycling of Construction and Demolition waste. This is another area where there has been a huge improvement in the lifetime of this Government with the EPA reporting that 85% of this waste is now being recycled.

Chewing Gum

The careless disposal of chewing gum is another major litter problem. Local authorities up and down the country are only too familiar with the experience of carrying out expensive improvements and then seeing the work destroyed by discarded chewing gum.

Later this year in partnership with industry, a major public awareness campaign and education programmes to raise awareness of the impact of gum litter and encourage proper gum disposal will commence.

End of life vehicles: Getting rid of old bangers

Old scrap cars can be dangerous, the source of serious pollution and are unsightly. The Government is currently finalising proposals for a new scheme to deal with scrap cars and other vehicles. The new measures will meet EU requirements. Under the scheme, facilities will be available where these vehicles can be disposed of responsibly, where the 'old bangers' will be properly depolluted and recycled in an environmentally sustainable way.



Taking Ireland to the TOP of the League

About 75% of the waste discarded at home or in the workplace is biodegradable. Traditionally the great bulk of this waste has been put in landfill in Ireland. This is the worst way of dealing with the problem: -

- ✓ It is not sustainable
- ✓ Biodegradable waste rotting in landfill creates methane,
- ✓ Dumping waste in the ground passes our problems to the next generation.

In 1995 almost 1.29 m tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste was generated in Ireland. The Fine Gael / Labour Party Coalition Government had made very little investment in the area. By 1998 only 11% of biodegradable waste was recycled. There have been big improvements under this Government. By 2004 over 630,000 tonnes or 33% of biodegradable municipal waste was being recycled.

We have done very well, however if Ireland is to play in the premier league we must meet a target of 80% diversion by 2016; that means we must divert 1.8 million tonnes – a year – away from landfill within 10 years.

The Government's National Strategy on Biodegradable Waste published by Minister Dick Roche in April this year shows the way to achieving this ambitious target. For more information and a copy of the strategy go to www.environ.ie.

Grants for Green Homes and Business

The Government has introduced a new Grant Scheme to encourage homeowners and businesses to install renewable energy systems for heating. Grants are now available for installing Wood Pellets Stoves, Solar Panels and Geothermal - heating systems.

Grants are payable as follows: -

Solar Pump – Horizontal ground collector	€4,300
Heat Pump – Vertical ground controller	€6,500
Heat Pump – Water (well) to water	€4,300
Heat Pump – Air source	€4,000
Wood Chip/Pellet Stove	€1,100
Biomass/Wood Pellet Stove with integral Boiler	€1,800
Wood/Chip Pellet Boiler	€4,200

Application forms and further details are available on the Sustainable Energy Ireland website www.sei.ie or on Lo-Call Number 1850 734 734

Sellafield

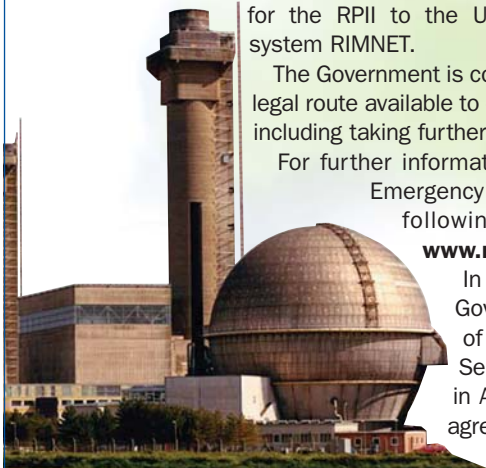
Sellafield is a major environmental concern to Ireland. This Government has, taken decisive action initiating two separate legal actions against the British Government under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and separately under the OSPAR Convention.

Irish Government persistence is paying dividends. In December 2004 a Bilateral Agreement on the Early Notification of an Accident or Incident was signed between the UK and Irish Governments. The British Government has also agreed to facilitate visits to the Sellafield installations by the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) and the Gardaí. Ireland has also secured access for the RPII to the UK's "real time" radiation monitoring system RIMNET.

The Government is committed to using every diplomatic and legal route available to continue the case for closing Sellafield, including taking further action.

For further information including access to the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents visit the following websites www.environ.ie and www.rpii.ie.

In addition to the bilateral agreement the Government campaign for the cessation of all radioactive discharges to the Irish Sea yielded another significant dividend in April 2004 when the British authorities agreed a 90% reduction in the discharge of Technetium -99 into the Irish Sea.



The potential energy blowing in the wind if harnessed has the equivalent output of 4,000 new nuclear plants. Wind is renewable clean and is infinite in supply

2006 rural water programme

On taking up the Environment portfolio, Minister Roche gave a commitment to provide the financial resources needed to upgrade the group scheme sector. This Government has provided record funding for the Rural Water Programme. The €145 million allocated for 2006 is a dramatic improvement in funding. Only €12 million was allocated in 1997 by the Fine Gael and Labour Coalition.

Speaking at the launch of the 2006 allocations the President of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes, Brendan O'Mahony paid tribute to Minister Roche:

"As a Group Water Scheme activist, it gives me special pleasure to see the huge investment that is being made in our community-owned water supplies. I never thought I would see the day when millions of Euro would be available for Group Water Scheme infrastructure and I have to acknowledge the contribution of the present Minister, Dick Roche, for ensuring that we have the resources to deal once and for all with the scourge of deficient drinking water quality."



Brendan O'Mahony & Minister Roche