



## Press Release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

### Increase Plastic Bag Levy Plea by IBAL as Usage Surges

- *Irish Consumers expected to use almost 130 Million Plastic Bags in 2006*
- *30% of Sites in the City “seriously littered” or “litter blackspots”*
- *Dublin Litter survey reveals divide between Southside and Northside*

Lobby group Irish Business Against Litter, who today released the results of a survey on litter levels in Dublin, has called for an immediate increase in the current plastic bag levy of 15 cent to 30 cent. IBAL revealed that litter levels in the capital are among the worst in the country, due in part to the number of plastic bags Irish consumers continue to use. The group estimates that 130 million bags will be bought this year alone – a rise of 50 Million bags on three years ago, when the levy was introduced.

The IBAL litter survey revealed that litter levels in Dublin remain 15% higher than the country as a whole. Plastic bags were visible in 28.5% of areas surveyed in Dublin compared to only 19% nationwide. IBAL believe that the “shock value” of the levy is lost. “It is alarming to realise that almost 50 million more bags will be used this year compared to when the levy was introduced in 2002. One way to reduce the amount of plastic bags in circulation and therefore reduce the amount appearing on our streets is to increase the levy” commented Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman of IBAL.

The survey, which is conducted to pressure councils into tackling litter levels throughout the city revealed a concentration of heavily littered areas on the Northside of the capital. Worryingly, over 30% of the areas surveyed in the capital were ‘litter blackspots’ or ‘seriously littered’. And of the dirtiest areas two thirds are located on the Northside of the city. They include Ballymun, Clondalkin and Mulhuddart. In contrast, the Southside areas of Blackrock, Rathfarnham and the Sandycove/Leopardstown area came out tops, as they were named the cleanest areas in Dublin.

The litter problem in the capital needs to be addressed immediately and in particular the disparity between the litter problem on the Northside vs. the Southside,” commented Dr Tom Cavanagh. “Many already disadvantaged areas on the Northside are now being subjected to littered areas while litter problems on the Southside are improving. Local councils need to recognise this problem and rectify it in order to ensure a cleaner environment, which will in turn instil a sense of pride in these areas, which will ultimately foster more community response and increased business activity. And as several provincial towns have shown, a cleaner environment can be realised quickly and at relatively low cost.” Dr Cavanagh added.

The City Centre has seen no change in its litter levels since the last survey and was also classed as a litter blackspot, with areas such as the River Liffey at the Halpenny Bridge and Charlottes Quay being some of the dirtiest in Dublin. The footpath at O’Connell Bridge was “dominated by old chewing gum” and The Grand Canal was deemed a litter blackspot. “We can’t speak of Ireland being clean if our capital city continues to be dirty and in particular if one side of the city is constantly fairing better than the other,” explains Dr Cavanagh.

IBAL is calling on the county councils in particular to get to grips with this chronic litter problem and they have suggested that a litter commissioner is put in place. The litter commissioner would have sole responsibility for the management of litter in the city. “TD Gay Mitchell has previously

called for a litter commissioner. We would be firmly behind this idea and believe that it would contribute towards a cleaner capital”.

The litter survey, which was carried out by An Taisce in accordance with international monitoring standards, revealed the average cleanliness levels for Dublin to be 15% behind the national average. 5 of the 20 Dublin areas included in the survey were deemed litter free. “This indicates that it can be a relatively simple transition to move from “moderately littered” to “litter free” status over a short period of time. Four areas which had a serious litter problem in the last survey have now been classed as moderately littered. They include Drumcondra, Lucan, Malahide and Tallaght.

An analysis of the composition of litter in Dublin shows chewing gum, fast food wrappers, plastic bags and ATM receipts to be a bigger problem in the Capital than elsewhere in the country.

The study was released in conjunction with the 2006 Anti-Litter League, which is run with financial assistance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. This year 53 areas nationwide will be surveyed for litter over the course of the year.

“IBAL recognises that Dublin’s local authorities face a tougher task than their counterparts outside the Capital ,” concludes Dr Cavanagh. “But it is evident that local authorities on the Southside are tackling the litter problem in a more consistent manner than their neighbours on the Northside. Creating a clean environment in relatively loosely-knit communities, with large inflows of traffic, is challenging. Yet the fact is, many areas are showing it is achievable.”

**ENDS**

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**Editors note:**

Set up in 1996, Irish Business Against Litter is an alliance of companies sharing a belief that continued economic prosperity - notably in the areas of tourism, food and direct foreign investment - is contingent on a clean, litter-free environment.

As part of the IBAL Anti-Litter League, all towns of population 6,000 and over are monitored independently by An Taisce in accordance with international grading standards.

**IBAL Dublin litter survey 2006 Round 2 Results**

<b>Area</b>	<b>“Litter Status</b>
Blackrock	“Litter Free”
Rathfarnham	“Litter Free”
Sandyford / Leopardstown	“Litter Free”
Dalkey / Killiney	“Litter Free”
Swords	“Litter Free”
Blanchardstown	Moderately Littered
Malahide	Moderately Littered
Lucan	Moderately Littered
Drumcondra	Moderately Littered
Tallaght	Moderately Littered
Dun Laoghaire	Moderately Littered
Clontarf	Moderately Littered
Donnybrook	Moderately Littered
Howth	Moderately Littered
Clondalkin	Serious Litter Problem

Ballyfermot	Serious Litter Problem
Finglas	Serious Litter Problem
City Centre	<b>Litter Blackspot</b>
Mulhuddart	<b>Litter Blackspot</b>
Ballymun	<b>Litter Blackspot</b>