



Information Note on Landfill Levy in Ireland

Key points

- Landfill levy of €75 per tonne is applied to commercial waste (since 2013).
- The Revenues from the Landfill levy go to the Environment Fund.
- The landfill levy is changing behaviour and has reduced landfill waste.
- The Circular Economy Bill is currently being considered by the Oireachtas and provides for a waste recovery levy and other levies, including a levy on single use drinks cups.
- The OECD have recommended introducing waste recovery and waste incineration levies.

1. Current tax on landfill in Ireland

1.1 Legislative basis

A Government levy of €75 per tonne is applied to dispose of commercial waste, subject to certain exemptions¹, in a landfill site.

This levy was established in 2002 and has since been amended by regulations made pursuant to the Waste Management Acts 1996 – 2003.

The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has the power to increase the landfill levy by Statutory Instrument.²

1.2 Rate

The rate has increased as follows:

- increase from €30 to €50 per tonne in 2011;
- increase from €50 to €65 per tonne in 2012; and,
- increase from €65 to €75 per tonne in 2013.

1.3 Use of revenues from the landfill levy

The revenues from the landfill levy go towards the Government's Environment Fund³ for environmental projects.

The revenue from the landfill levy fluctuated between €30 million and €50 million over the period 2010 – 2017 and was less than €20 million in 2018.⁴

1.4 Impact of the landfill levy

Disposal to landfill has fallen from over 80% in 2001 to 14% in 2018 according to the Environmental Protection Agency and the landfill levy has been a key driver of this.⁵

¹ [Waste Management \(Landfill Levy\) Regulations 2015](#).

² In July 2020 Minister Bruton announced that a proposed increase of the landfill levy to €80 per tonne was one of a number of environmental measures for consideration, press release [here](#).

³ Information about and accounts of the Environment Fund [here](#);

The environment fund was considered as part of a DPER [Spending Review Paper](#) in 2017.

⁴ CSO [Environment Taxes 2018](#).

⁵ EPA [Current Trends in Waste](#);

The ESRI has conducted an analysis of the impact of the national landfill policy on greenhouse gas emissions in the waste sector, report [here](#).

1.5 International comparison

The UK has a landfill tax.⁶

There are two rates, a standard and lower rate, from April 2021 they are as follows:

- Standard rate £96.70/tonne
- Lower rate £3.10/tonne⁷

Denmark, Finland, France and Iceland also have waste taxes, these apply to either incineration or landfilling and are charged on the basis of weight or volume.

2. Commentary and Proposals for Reform

2.1 Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy and Circular Economy Bill 2021

As mentioned above, there are some exemptions to the landfill levy. The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy states that the impact of a particular exemption from the landfill levy – for bio-waste – and whether it should be retained is something that will be analysed.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy also proposes further environmental levies – for waste recovery (at €5 per tonne) and single use coffee cups (a “latte levy”).⁸

A virgin plastic levy is also something that is to be considered.

The Circular Economy Bill is currently being debated in the Houses of the Oireachtas.⁹

The report on the pre-legislative scrutiny of that Bill was published on 16 December 2021.¹⁰ The General Scheme of the Bill was published in June 2021.

2.2 OECD

The OECD in its Environmental Performance Review 2021 recommended increasing the current landfill levy and introduce a levy on the incineration and export of reusable and recyclable waste.¹¹

⁶ [UK Landfill Tax Rates](#).

⁷ Inert or inactive waste is subject to the lower rate (e.g. rocks or soil).

⁸ [Action Plan for a Circular Economy](#).

⁹ The bill is currently before Dáil Éireann, see [here](#). [Circular Economy Bill](#) (General Scheme). The Bill provides for the waste recovery levy and also has provision for the Minister to make regulations seeking to reduce certain single-use products, including disposable hot and cold beverage cups, where reusable alternatives exist and such regulations may provide for an environmental levy on such items.

¹⁰ [Report on Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Circular Economy Bill 2021](#).

¹¹ OECD [Environmental Performance Review Ireland](#) 2021

2.3 Dáil Debates

A Parliamentary Question regarding a waste recovery levy and waste incineration levy was asked by Deputy Ged Nash in July of last year.¹²

- The Minister of State advised that a recovery levy could not apply to landfill as this is a disposal activity and there is a landfill levy of €75 per tonne already in place.
- Information on the yield of a waste recovery levy of €5 per tonne is not available as this would depend on whether the waste recovery levy would apply to:
 - All recovery operations, or just incineration;
 - Recovery or incineration activity in Ireland only or to waste exported for recovery or incineration; and,
 - Any exemptions that might be provided for.
- The purpose of the recovery levy is to change behaviour, not to raise revenue.

¹² [PQ/39911/21](#) and [PQ/39920/21](#) – taken together.