



Ideas for Ireland

Let's lead in the fight to combat



Climate Change

Zero Waste Alliance Ireland (ZWA) is deeply concerned with the negative impacts our current waste management systems and practices are having on our health, our environment and our climate.

The Climate is impacted by many factors and all must be considered in the overall system of cause and effect.

We make the following summary submission in the interests of brevity as many points will be made by other groups and individuals, with relevant references.

We seek, above all, action on addressing the issues.

“Actions and decisions taken by our government will have a wider audience, in the EU and internationally, just as every pebble thrown into a lake makes an impact in the larger lake’s ripple.”

Our Basic Principles

It is a basic principle that human communities must behave like natural ones, living comfortably within the natural flow of energy from the sun and plants, producing no wastes which cannot be recycled back into the earth's systems, and guided by new economic values which are in harmony with personal and ecological values.



In nature, the waste products of every living organism serve as raw materials to be transformed by other living creatures, or benefit the planet in other ways.

Instead of organising systems that efficiently dispose of or recycle our waste, we need to design systems of production that have little or no waste to begin with.

There are no technical barriers to achieving a “zero waste society”, only our habits, our greed as a society, and the current economic structures and policies which have led us to the present environmental, climatic, social and economic difficulties.

“Zero Waste” is a realistic whole-system approach to addressing the problem of society’s unsustainable resource flows – it encompasses waste elimination at source through product design and producer responsibility, together with waste reduction strategies further down the supply chain, such as cleaner production, product repairing, dismantling, recycling, re-use and composting.

ZWAI strongly believes that Ireland should have a policy of not sending to other countries our wastes for further treatment or recycling, particularly to developing countries where local populations are being exposed to dioxins and other very toxic POPs. Relying on other countries’ infrastructure to achieve our “recycling” targets is not acceptable from a global ecological, climate impacts and societal perspective.

In recent years, Zero Waste Alliance Ireland has made the following submissions in response to public consultations:

- a) in Sept 2011, to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, on waste policy;
- b) in Sept 2012, to the Environmental Protection Agency, on the Agency’s draft National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the Stockholm Convention;
- c) in Dec 2013, to Dublin City Council Regional Waste Coordinator in response to a notice of intention to commence preparation of regional waste management plans;
- d) in Feb 2014, to the Dept of the Environment, Community and Local Government, on proposals for the regulation of household waste collection & dealing with used or end-of-life tyres;
- e) in Jan 2015, to the Eastern & Midlands Regional Waste Coordinator, Dublin, on the Eastern and Midlands Draft Regional Waste Management Plan 2015 – 2021;
- f) in March 2015, to the Environmental Protection Agency in response to the Agency’s public consultation on the National Inspection Plan 2015-2017 for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems; and,
- g) in April 2015, to Irish Water, on the Draft Water Services Strategic Plan.

The Background - Sustainability and the Circular Economy

The goal of environmentally sustainable development requires, as a basic principle, that human communities must behave like natural ones, living comfortably within the natural flow of energy from the sun and plants, producing no wastes which cannot be recycled back into the earth's systems, and guided by new economic values which are in harmony with personal and ecological values. In nature, the waste products of every living organism serve as raw materials to be transformed by other living creatures, or benefit the planet in other ways. Our policies and our practices need to mirror this ecological reality.

While land filling may have to remain an acceptable means of dealing in the very short term with residual quantities of non-recyclable and non-compostable municipal solid wastes, the only long-term sustainable solution is to completely eliminate the production of materials which cannot be re-used, recycled or naturally bio-degraded. This will result not only in a saving of scarce resources, but will re-adjust our relationship to the earth's material assets from a linear to a cyclical one, enhancing our ability to live comfortably while reducing environmental damage. It is in this holistic context that we make the following summary submissions.

Itemised actions proposed.

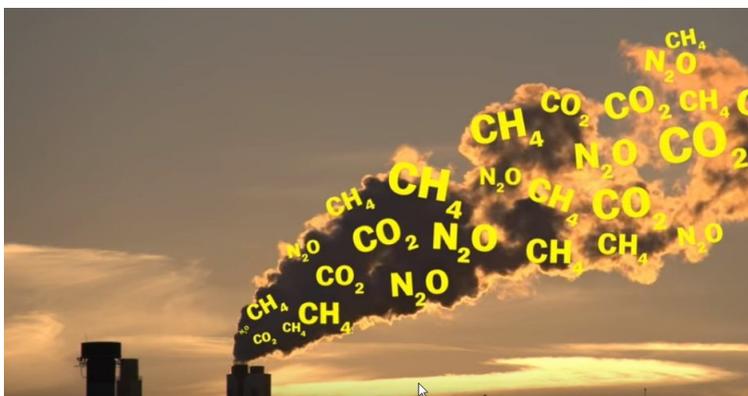


1. The Government must confirm now that Ireland will **stop burning waste** either in Incinerators or RDF (Refuse Derived Fuel) facilities and Cement Kilns. Ban any new Incineration plans. Ban burning of used Tyres.

In essence adopt, and be a leader in achieving, the **Circular Economy** direction set by the EU.

We all know, from numerous Bord Pleanala and EPA Oral Hearings, that

Incinerators contribute to climate warming by emitting greenhouse gases (GHGs). The most common greenhouse gases associated with the incineration process are carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide (NoX and SoX). Every tonne of waste emits 1 tonne of CO₂. The growing presence of these gases in our atmosphere is a contribution in speeding up the effects of climate change .



2. Implement an **affordable Food Waste prevention strategy** to ensure Food Waste is no longer rotting in Landfills. This means regulation, monitoring and enforcement. They cannot rely on the private sector alone to deliver a nationwide solution.

Fight Food Waste

From Farm to Fork



3. Create a consumer awareness **crusade against Food Waste** from Farm to Fork and back it up with legislation to allow surplus food sharing. This will prevent water, land, resources, energy and time being wasted and lower emissions all along the path.

4. **Micro generation:** Kick-start **community ownership of renewable energy** by introducing a fair payment for solar electricity and enabling grants for domestic micro-generation and efficiency schemes.

5. The Government must confirm now that Ireland will **stop burning coal** for electricity in 2022 & peat for electricity in 2020.



6.

a) **TRANSPORT:** Realign investment to achieve the goals of the 2009 **Smarter Travel Policy**, by seriously incentivising Electric Vehicle use and making Public Transport Services affordable and easy to use.

b) **Electric Vehicle Support Network:** Provide leadership in establishing a viable charging network of points for Electric Vehicles nationally.

c) **SPATIAL PLANNING:** Plan buildings and developments to minimize use of transport and make cycle lanes a mandatory element of all new roads.



7. **GREEN FUNDS:** Mobilize significant funds to offer financing options

and project management support to households and commercial enterprises to upgrade the energy performance of their homes/premises.

8.  Decide now that from 2020 all **new buildings** built in Ireland will produce minimal carbon pollution through energy efficiency measures.
9.  **Restore Ireland's peatlands as a means of emissions reduction** and carbon storage and to assist in important biodiversity protection and flood protection.
10.  The Government should make regular contributions to the **UN Green Climate Fund** that are in line with Ireland's responsibility for climate change.
11.  The Oireachtas should pass the **Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill** to divest the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund from fossil fuels as soon as possible.
12.  **Health:** Encourage and support a transition to a more-plant based diet for the sake both of our health and of the climate.
13.  **Agriculture : Support farmers** financially and educationally to gradually transition away from intensive meat and dairy production and to generate their own energy from sustainable sources (Wind, Solar, BioMass, Waste Digestion etc).
14.  End all new **oil and gas exploration** in Irish waters and divert incentives to Sustainable/renewable energy programmes.
15.  Commit Ireland to doing our fair share to meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement and update Ireland's national policy to reflect this.
16.  Push the EU to revise and strengthen its targets in light of the Paris Agreement, in line with science and equity.
17.  **Adopt 5-year climate action plans** that contain specific 5-year emissions reduction targets in line with the Government's 2050 transition objective.
18.  **Align policies:** Ensure decisions taken on major national policies, such as capital investment and spatial planning, align with Ireland's emission reduction commitments.

19. Make the subsidy for peat-firing of power stations ring-fenced for a new 'Just Transition Fund' which will assist with reuse and regeneration of the peatlands, biomass production, soil enrichment activities (e.g. large scale Composting, food waste digestion) and food growing.

[August 2017 - Zero Waste Alliance Ireland \(www.zerowasteireland.com\)](http://www.zerowasteireland.com)

About Zero Waste Alliance Ireland.

Zero Waste Alliance Ireland (Zwai) is the first organisation in Ireland to promote the Zero Waste concept in its policy statements dating from 2003. Zwai was established in May 1999 as an alliance of anti-landfill and anti-incineration groups from many locations in Ireland, and has subsequently developed into a national confederation of local residents' groups, supported by some of Ireland's principal environmental organisations, with the objectives of:



- i) sharing information, ideas and contacts,*
- ii) finding and recommending environmentally sustainable and practical solutions to the growing domestic, municipal, industrial and agricultural waste management crisis in Ireland;*
- iii) lobbying Government and local authorities to implement environmentally sustainable waste management practices, including clean production, elimination of toxic substances from products, re-use, recycling, segregation of discarded materials at source, and other beneficial practices;*
- iv) lobbying Government to follow the best international practice (for example, the policies and practices of countries such as New Zealand, Australia and many other countries, regions and cities which have adopted the policy of Zero Waste) and EU recommendations by introducing fiscal and economic measures designed to penalise the manufacturers of products which cannot be re-used, recycled or composted at the end of their useful lives, and to financially support companies making products which can be re-used, recycled or are made from recycled materials;*
- v) raising public awareness about the long-term damaging climate, human and animal health and economic consequences of landfilling and of the destruction of materials by incineration; and,*
- vi) maintaining contact and exchanging information with similar national networks in other countries, and with international zero waste organisations.*
- vii) actively implementing Technology innovation in dealing with Commercial Food Waste in Ireland.*
- viii) and Zwai has concentrated on the objective of ensuring Ireland's compliance with the Stockholm Convention and the National Implementation Plan.*

Zwai is represented on the Government's Waste Forum, is a member of the Irish Environmental Network and the Environmental Pillar, and receives funds from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, through IEN.