

## Repak Slams VFI Call for Levy on Packaging

(12.05.04) Repak, the industry funded used packaging compliance scheme, has slammed the VFI's call on the Minister for the Environment to introduce a levy on non-returnable containers and packaging as unworkable and self-serving.

According to Andrew Hetherington, CEO, Repak "Many of the suppliers of packaging to the licensed trade are already paying for the recovery and recycling of their packaging through fees paid to Repak. The volume of used packaging ending up as waste in pubs, as reported by the VFI, reflects the success of publicans. Essentially the VFI and their members are calling for somebody else to pay for their waste management. This is unworkable as all sectors of business and householders now accept that they have to pay for their waste and why should VFI members be any different. I am also questioning the rationale for the levy and how the proceeds would be used."

Repak is fundamentally opposed to the introduction of additional levies on used packaging as companies are already paying a tax on the packaging they produce in the form of Repak membership. This fee reflects the type and quantity of materials produced and funds the recycling of these materials. Repak strongly opposes the introduction of levies as they:

- increase consumer inflation
- will do little to increase the recycling rates of these materials
- put future funding of Repak and packaging recycling rates into jeopardy especially the attainment of EU packaging recycling targets
- will have limited success in reducing the volumes of packaging produced

Instead of introducing additional packaging levies Repak believes that increased enforcement of the Waste Management Regulations to ensure all relevant VFI members meets their recycling obligations and that those obligated join Repak would be more beneficial.<sup>11</sup>

### **About Repak**

Repak is a not-for-profit members based packaging compliance scheme, currently Ireland's only producer responsibility scheme, which was established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1997.

It was created as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's

National Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001, as set by the EU directive.

The organisation also performs an administrative role for the recycling of used farm film (silage cover) through the IFFPG.

Repak also runs a variety of educational initiatives such as Repak National Recycling Week in October, Repak Green Christmas, Repak National Conference. It is also a sponsor of An Taisce's National Spring Clean campaign, the Tidy Towns Competition and the schools based Repak Cash for Cans programme.

Last year Repak launched a trial plastic and beverage carton recycling scheme as part of a strategy to target traditionally more difficult material types. The beverage carton scheme has now been extended to all households in Dublin with a Kerbside/Green Wheelie Bin collection scheme.

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#### Messages

- Additional levies are double taxation
- Levies will not necessarily lead to higher recycling levels
- Additional levies will increase inflation
- Levies are focusing on the litter issue which is a behavioural problem
- Levies will do little to change behaviour