



Statement Wednesday, 16th March 2005

by Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman of IBAL, following today's announcement by the Minister of the Environment of proposals to tackle problematic litter items (16 March 2005)

Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) is disappointed to learn of the Minister's decision not to adopt the recommendation of a consultancy report to impose a mandatory levy on chewing gum. Similarly, we feel it will be a source of frustration to the many thousands of volunteers working to keep communities around Ireland free of litter.

Our surveys of towns and cities established that chewing gum is the most damaging source of litter we encounter, because of the enormous cost and extreme effort in removing it. As a business organisation, we are loath to propose new taxes, but we accept the problem of chewing gum warrants special attention.

Irrespective of the form a levy takes, it must represent a meaningful contribution to the 20million+ yearly cost of removing gum from our streets. As laid out in our submission, in IBAL's view this would translate into a levy of 20c per packet. In terms of recovering the cost of cleaning-up, the figures being quoted in the Minister's statement today (Appendix*) fall well short of the mark.

IBAL supports the Minister's proposed negotiating of agreements in relation to 'removable' litter items such as fast food wrappings and ATM receipts.

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*McIver Consulting and Patel Tonra Environmental Consultants recommended a mandatory levy of 10% of the retail price, an average of 5c per pack, yielding 4-5m per annum.

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