



Patrick Costello TD

Green Party/Comhaontas Glas

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Email: Patrick.Costello@Oireachtas.ie

Minister Eamon Ryan,
Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Communications

28th June 2022

Re: Litter Pollution (Amendment) Bill 2022

Dear Minister Ryan,

I am writing to inform you of my bill which was introduced in the Dáil last Thursday, the Litter Pollution (Amendment) Bill 2022. The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Litter Pollution Act 1997. The Bill proposes to make a change to the fines that can be issued. The Bill will also make provision for transitional matters.

The last increase to these fines was made by our esteemed colleague John Gormley, who made that change by way of statutory instrument ([S.I. No. 558 of 2007](#)). That option remains available to you.

I therefore request you to take the following **three** actions:

1. An increase as per my bill is required given a large cohort of dog owners are not deterred by the current fine for failing to clean up after their dog. An increase in the fine increases the deterrent and incentivises local authorities to ramp up enforcement. Concerted efforts at enforcement have proven effective as evidenced in 2016 in Dublin Central.

Action: Increase the fine for dog fouling by statutory instrument.

2. Section 29 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 permits the Minister to give general policy directions in writing to local authorities in relation to certain areas of waste management.

Action: Issue a new directive to all local authorities by way of new guidelines and/or criteria to:

- A. Increase the availability of bins in all public places with specific attention to**

those frequented by dog-walkers; &

B. Increase the availability of bio-degradable bags in areas frequented by dog-walkers.

C. Publish a county/city dog fouling enforcement plan that includes measurable goals and KPIs.

3. Finally, I am requesting you to make available support and assistance including the provision of adequate funding, for research and development as permitted by Section 30 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 and Section 28 of the Waste Management Act, 1996.

Action: Support the establishment and funding of a nationwide trial of DNA testing of dog faeces to support enforcement.

While dog fouling may seem a trivial issue, it impacts on quality life. It diminishes pride of place in the community. It often effects vulnerable members of society, particularly users of mobility aids and the visually impaired. It is a threat to public health through the spreading of E.coli and parasites. Dog foul is a potent pollutant and has been identified as a significant threat to water quality across Ireland, including in the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere.

I implore you to use the powers vested in your office to take the three actions outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Costello', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Costello TD