

The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland

The Professional Body for Chemists in Ireland

"Statement issued by The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland on the Need for a Hazardous Waste Disposal Facility in this Country"

Following recent media reports on hazardous waste treatment in Ireland, The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland (ICI), the professional body for Chemists in Ireland expresses the view that the ability to treat hazardous waste in Ireland is of utmost importance to this country, future generations, and the development of our economy.

- The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland considers it unacceptable for Ireland to abdicate its responsibility and continue to export its hazardous waste to be incinerated abroad.
- The pharmaceutical industry is vital to Ireland's economy. The public derive great benefit from this industry in the form of medicines to treat diseases, high quality employment, the major contribution to our balance of payments in the form of exports, and the benefits to our economy by the services provided to this sector. This industry like many others produces waste, some of which is hazardous.
- We must primarily address waste by reduction, reuse and recycling. For waste which cannot be treated in this manner, Ireland needs a hazardous waste disposal facility. At present, incineration appears the most viable option for disposal of such waste, combined with mechanical biological treatment (MBT).
- Incinerators can provide an environmentally friendly means of hazardous waste disposal. Such a facility should be viewed in terms of an energy from waste resource, to feed into the national grid and reduce dependence on imported oil and gas. Having the infrastructure to treat hazardous waste is just as important as having adequate infrastructure to deliver gas, electricity, fuel, and water to consumers.
- Much research into "Green Chemistry" is on-going into developing safer, greener manufacturing methods from renewable resources and alternative methods, including biocatalytic methods of detoxifying waste which should be encouraged. It must be recognised this is long term and will take many years to implement.

The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland urges Government to show leadership and ensure Ireland has state of the art technology to treat hazardous waste from the industry in a well-managed, environmentally sound, and safe manner, and meeting EU requirements. The Institute of Chemistry of Ireland believes that our view is consistent with the EPA National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008 – 2012.

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