



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Scotland**

## **Parliamentary Briefing – Too good to waste?**

**15 November 2005**

### **Scotland's National Waste Plan**

Scotland's National Waste Strategy (and the Plan devised to implement it) is driven by the need to meet EU Directives on waste; notably the Landfill Directive which sets a requirement that by 2010 the quantity of biodegradeable municipal waste that is sent to landfill must be reduced to 75% of that produced in 1995, further reduced to 50% by 2013 and to 35% by 2020.

The National Waste Plan sets interim targets for Scotland to help achieve these goals. These targets are that 25% of municipal waste be recycled and composted by 2006, rising to 30% by 2008 and that the quantity of biodegradeable municipal waste disposed of to landfill in 2006 should reduce to below 1.5 million tonnes.

Friends of the Earth Scotland (FoE) fully supports the aims of increasing recycling and composting and of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. The increase in recycling shows how much can be achieved by setting targets and providing good levels of funding. However, it is becoming clear that while this end of the waste equation is improving, Scotland is still producing more and more waste every year. The National Waste Strategy will ultimately fail if it is not set in the context of a policy to reduce resource use, with its positive environmental impacts but also increased economic efficiency and cost savings.

A new view of waste must be formed. Dumping waste in a hole in the ground, or burning it, makes neither environmental nor economic sense. The traditional end-of-pipe attitude that prevails must be radically changed to view the current use and waste of resources as a missed opportunity for the environment and the economy. FoES supports the idea of a zero waste society. This is an approach that is being adopted around the world, from Doncaster to New Zealand and which is succeeding in increasing resource efficiency, boosting recycling and composting rates and creating jobs.

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## **What Friends of the Earth Scotland would like to see:**

- Waste reduction and re-use targets incorporated into the National Waste Plan, as called for by the Environment and Rural Development Committee in its Inquiry into the National Waste Plan in 2003.
- The 55% recycling target brought forward from 2020 to 2012.
- A National Waste Reduction Strategy, which includes not just municipal waste but also commercial and industrial waste. Within this should be a timetable for implementing variable waste charging to incentivise waste reduction. The Members Bill proposal to tax plastic bag use would also feed into this by providing a clear signal to consumers that there is a real cost attached to wasting resources.
- A nationwide moratorium on incinerators. The majority of the 11 Area Waste Plans leave the door open for burning waste. By taking the route of incineration, Scotland will undermine its efforts to reduce waste by creating a situation where incinerators need to be fed waste over a 25 year period to remain economic. The Australian Capital Territory (Canberra) and Edmonton, Canada, have both achieved high rates of diversion from landfill – around 70% - without the need for incinerators.
- A greater focus on the development of markets for recycled material in Scotland, including ambitious targets for public procurement of recycled products such as office supplies and construction materials.
- Sanctions applied to those local authorities who miss the recycling and composting targets.
- A detailed study carried out and published by the Scottish Executive of best practice around the world in efficient resource use and zero waste plus a commitment to tackle Scotland's growing waste mountain from this perspective.

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