



Lean Bean,  
8 Riverwalk,  
Citywest Business Campus,  
D24YCC8,  
04/11/2022

Dear Minister,

My name is [REDACTED], I'm the owner of a small business called Lean Bean a cafe in Dublin.

Firstly, from a personal and business point, I am very pro making environmentally conscious decisions and am of the opinion we absolutely have to make drastic and radical changes in how we live our lives, if we are to reduce our emissions as per our necessary targets set out in the Paris agreement, while also growing the economy. We as a business are already adding in measures to be more sustainable such as a rinser sprinkler system for our customers to easily rinse their cups to encourage reusables over single use. We also along with most businesses offer a discount to customers who bring a reusable cup over single use.

While the plastic bag levy was a great success, I do not envisage the single use disposable cups (SUDC) levy having the same result or anywhere close to it. There are multiple reasons for this which I will outline.

With the plastic bag levy, people leave reusable bags in their car, take them from their home as they go to the shop, use another type of bag such as a school bag or don't use a bag at all. There are also compostable bags that are free now in some stores. Also, the 15c levy was a lot less costly relative to a shop of groceries versus the 'latte levy' of 20c to a cup of coffee. If a bag of groceries cost €30, a 15c levy is 0.5% whereas a 20c levy on a cappuccino of €3.70 is 5% that is 10 times the cost. People also consume a lot more cups of coffee than they use bags for a grocery shop.

Coffee cups simply don't work the same way as plastic bags. There is the issue of simply carrying reusable cups, you are expecting people to go around with reusable cups on them whenever they want a coffee to go, whether it is back to the office, to the park, by the sea, on a walk, etc. You would end up having a reusable cup in your car, gym bag, office, basically anywhere you think you may want to get a coffee to go and there are plenty of scenarios where you can't carry a cup.

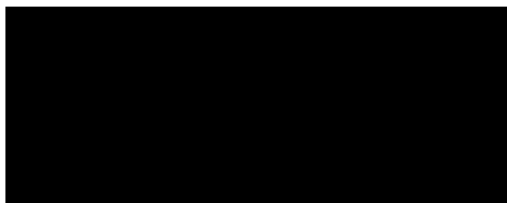
When our business made the move to going compostable over 3 years ago, we discovered that it was essentially a marketing scam because if the compostable packaging doesn't go into a compostable (brown) bin then it doesn't get treated correctly to be disposed of. And for the vast majority they are not going into brown bins. Restaurants and cafes simply dispose of them into the recycling bin because it is not feasible to dispose of them into the compost bin. A recycling bin (1100 litres) costs €5.50 compared to a compostable bin

(240L) costing €11. The reason for this is because the brown bins provided by the waste companies are much smaller and more expensive because up until recently the brown bin was used for food only and had to be smaller because of the weight when it's full of food for the bin trucks to lift them. However now there is a demand for a compostable bin for packaging which would be much lighter in weight but are not available. I have already flagged this with our waste company about 3 years ago and they told me they were working on a solution, alas one still hasn't been provided.

So yes, reusable cups are much better but SUDC cannot be eliminated so they must be reduced where possible and must be disposed of correctly. There should be public compostable bins, as well as recycling instead of general. There is next to no recycling or compostable bins in public areas. The government are part of the problem here and needs to become part of the solution not simply add a levy onto already suffering coffee shops.

All the levy is going to do is put people off from buying a coffee to go which will hurt coffee shops/cafes and a sector that is already facing so many challenges. It may encourage reusables but not to the extent needed and will not eliminate them because of the issues I have outlined, and this will just add to the inflationary issues that already exist. I would like to provide you with a better alternative solution but I think penalising coffee shops with a simple levy is not the answer.

Yours Sincerely,



Owner

Lean Bean