



Media Information

18<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2005

## **Ireland must strive to combat negative impacts of Climate Change, SEI urges**

***Ireland's ability to grow crops such as potatoes under threat from Climate Change***

***Energy Awareness Week 2005 kicks off – energy consumers urged to take action***

As Ireland faces major environmental challenges, including a possible 11% increase in rainfall by 2050 and even an inability by farmers to grow staple crops such as potatoes, a concerted effort is now required to combat Climate Change. That is according to Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) at the start of Energy Awareness Week 2005. The theme of this year's campaign, which runs from 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September, is Combat Climate Change.

According to Mr. David Taylor, Chief Executive – SEI, "Ireland is not alone in its efforts to combat Climate Change. The EU through its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol is committed to acting on this global threat".

Climate Change refers to the phenomenon that is causing the earth to become warmer which means that our climate and our weather systems are changing. Most scientists now agree that energy generated from fossil fuels which releases carbon dioxide, is largely responsible for Climate Change and that the choices we make today will decide the future of our climate.

Climate Change is already starting to affect Ireland, as evidenced in recent years by the increase in extreme weather events such as floods and storms. Already there has been a noticeable increase in flooding, particularly in the west of Ireland. Likewise we have experienced more summer droughts. If this continues the impacts will be substantial – among them the risk that Irish farmers won't be able to grow potatoes anymore. We could also see the arrival of new agricultural pests, threatening crop development.

The Combat Climate Change campaign aims to encourage all of us to play our part in addressing this very serious issue. A special website [www.combatclimatechange.ie](http://www.combatclimatechange.ie) has been launched which highlights the actions that can be taken by people to help Combat Climate

Change. The site also includes an energy calculator which allows people to find out if there are a high or low energy user.

Mr. Taylor said, "Climate Change is such a big issue, it might seem hard to believe that there is anything we can do about. However the good news is that we can. Knowing what causes Climate Change means that we know where to look for a solution. The energy we use everyday produces carbon dioxide which causes the greenhouse effect which in turn leads to changes in our climate. So the solution is to use less energy where we can and embrace renewable energy sources which don't produce carbon dioxide. By using less energy not only will you be helping combat Climate Change, you will save money and make your home more comfortable. I would encourage everyone to log on to [www.combatclimatechange.ie](http://www.combatclimatechange.ie) and make a pledge to be more energy efficient."

According to research commissioned by SEI, the impact which Climate Change will have on our country by 2050 will be sizeable. Ireland's winters will be wetter, with an increased risk of flooding as a result of Climate Change. The temperature in January will have increased by 1.5 degrees Celsius. Winter conditions in Northern Ireland and the north midlands will be similar to the south west coast today. While milder winters might seem like a good thing, this is not necessarily the case. Rainfall will increase by 11%.

Ireland's summers will be warmer and drier – by 2050 the average July temperature could increase by 2.5 degrees Celsius. While most of us would welcome warmer summers, there could be serious implications of this increase in the form of summer droughts which will impact on the cost of water supply.

Throughout Energy Awareness Week, a series of activities will take place to help increase public awareness of the energy efficiency opportunities that are within most people's grasp.

Sustainable Energy Ireland was established on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 as a statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of sustainable energy in Ireland. Sustainable Energy Ireland is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 with programmes part financed by the European Union.

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## **Editors Notes:**

### **Energy Tips**

Here is a list of ten ways you can save energy:

- 1. Turn your TV off rather than leave it on stand-by** – equipment on stand-by uses up to 20% of the energy it would use when fully on
  
- 2. Walk or cycle instead of driving for short journeys**– it costs nothing and is good for you
  
- 3. Turn your heating down** – reducing your thermostat by 1° celsius will knock 10% off your heating bill
  
- 4. Buy 'A' rated kitchen appliances** – they cost less to run and over time will give you considerable savings on your electricity bill
  
- 5. Use energy efficient light bulbs (CFLs) instead of traditional bulbs** – they use 1/5th energy and last up to 10 times as long
  
- 6. Insulate your attic** – attic insulation will keep the heat in your home for longer and pay for itself in 2-3 years
  
- 7. Fit a lagging jacket** – lagging your hot water cylinder will keep the water hotter for longer and pay for itself in 2-3 months
  
- 8. Don't overfill your kettle** – only boil as much water as you need
  
- 9. Fit thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) to your radiators**
  
- 10. Support renewable energy initiatives in your community**