

## **TRANSPORT SECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS – SEI**

### **Report shows Ireland now has one car for every two adults**

As private car ownership reaches unprecedented levels, transport is now responsible for higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than any other sector of the Irish economy, according to a new report published today by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI). The report 'Energy in Transport – Trends and Influencing Factors 2006,' is the second such report on energy use in transport published by SEI's Energy Policy Statistical Support Unit (EPSSU) and is intended to provide new analysis and information on this important area. Among the most significant issues highlighted in the report is the sector's complete dependence on oil products, almost all of which are imported and the continuing increase in engine size in privately owned cars.

#### Key findings:

- In 2005, the transport sector accounted for 33% (5,089 ktoe) of Ireland's primary energy demand or 41% of final energy demand, consuming more than twice as much as industry.
- In 2005, energy use in transport was over 99% dependent on oil products, all of which were imported. The sector with the second highest oil dependency was the residential sector where oil accounted for 30% of total fuel usage.
- In 2005 there was one car for every two adults in Ireland, representing a 62% increase in adult ownership since 1990.
- The sector was responsible for 33% (15,273 kt CO<sub>2</sub>) of Ireland's energy related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, higher than any of the other sectors, namely industry, residential and services sectors.
- Final energy use in the transport sector has grown by 151% (6.3% per annum on average) between 1990 and 2005, the fastest growth rate of all sectors. Growth of 8% was recorded in 2005.
- Estimated total spend on transport energy, excluding air, in 2005 was €5.2 billion.

David Taylor, CEO, SEI said "While we have seen substantial growth in Ireland's energy use over the last decade, trends in transport are giving the greatest cause for concern. Road travel continues to be the dominant form of transport for passengers in Ireland. As a result we have

seen an increase in the number of cars on the road, an increase in household car usage and changes in the structure of the vehicle fleet in Ireland towards larger cars. In addition, the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fuel efficiency of new private cars being purchased each year since 2000 have shown no improvement. These trends should inform the development of policy programmes to mitigate demand for energy in the transport sector.”

Private car ownership is shown in the report as having increased by 62% since 1990 and there is now one car for every two adults in Ireland. In addition, figures for 2005 show that there were 1.2 cars per household compared with 0.8 in 1990. This figure has risen consistently and the number of private cars exceeded the number of permanently occupied dwellings for the first time in 1998.

The Report also highlights an increase in the number of cars with an engine size of more than 1.2 litres. In 2005 39% of private cars had an engine size of between 1.2 and 1.5 litres.

There is now more than six times the number of private cars on our roads in the 1.7 to 1.9 litre range and more than three times the number over 1.9 litre. Over the period 1990 to 2005 the average engine size of a private car in Ireland has increased by 12%.

“The growth in oil dependence, green house gas emissions, and urban congestion, need to be considered alongside safety in any vision of sustainable transport solutions for Ireland. Positive action with regard to fuel switching, improvements in passenger mile fuel efficiency vehicle choice and usage patterns will need to accelerate if we are to move onto a sustainable path. The promotion of such positive action must form part of a tactical approach that delivers change in both the short and long term. While considerations with regard to infrastructural and technology planning and advancements will obviously form a key part of how we reach our targets, we must not ignore more the practical and immediate changes that can be made.”  
continued Mr Taylor.

Commercial road users have also significantly contributed to the rise in energy consumption in the sector. Fuel consumption by road freight showed a higher increase than any other mode of road transport, increasing by 264% (9% per annum) over the period 1990 to 2005. The largest category however remains the private car which was responsible for 37% of all road transport and 24% of all transport fuel usage in 2005.

“While considerable discussion regarding energy in transport focuses on private car transport, this report also highlights the increase in energy used for freight transport, which grew to over three and half times 1990 levels in 2005. Freight transport services have grown dramatically since 1990 and have grown faster than private transport and the economy as a whole. This is no

doubt a reflection of rising consumption and trade patterns and is a further shift in the structure of the economy," added Mr Taylor.

For the first time since the introduction of the National Car Test (NCT), data collected at test centres throughout the country is being used by SEI to generate new estimates for private car and taxi / hackney mileage as well as fuel consumption. This report is intended to be a further progression from the first SEI EPSSU transport report published in 2000 and part of an ongoing process aimed at developing and improving energy statistics in the transport sector.

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**Editors Notes:**

A copy of the full report can downloaded from [www.sei.ie](http://www.sei.ie)

**About SEI**

Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) is the statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of sustainable energy. SEI is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 with programmes part-financed by the European Union.