



Media Information

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SEI figures reveal average mileage of cars in Ireland less than commonly thought

Private motoring energy usage increasing

New figures released today by Sustainable Energy Ireland's (SEI) Energy Policy Statistical Support Unit indicate that the average annual mileage of Irish cars is lower than commonly thought. The findings were announced today as part of research that SEI is conducting for a report on energy and factors affecting its increasing use in Irish transport, the full details of which will be published in September.

The research reports that energy use for transport in Ireland has grown by 151% between 1990 and 2005, driven by economic growth, the associated increase in commercial and freight traffic and increased private vehicle ownership.

In researching private car usage, SEI calculated the average annual mileage of private cars based on the actual odometer (milometer) readings from the National Car Test data of all cars tested in 2005 (over half a million private cars of age four years and older). Anonymised data was made available to SEI by the Department of Transport for statistical purposes. The preliminary results are as follows:

- In 2005 the average annual mileage of all cars was 16,894 kilometres (10,498 miles) per car
- Petrol cars were found to have an average annual mileage of 15,969 kilometres (9,923 miles)
- Diesel cars, as would be expected, had a higher figure of 23,817 kilometres (14,799 miles)

Anecdotally the average mileage of a private car was thought to be around 19,000 kilometres (12,000 miles) and some estimates put it as high as 24,000 kilometres (15,000 miles).

While average mileage per car may be lower than commonly believed, the overall distance travelled is increasing due to the increasing numbers of cars on our roads, contributing to a rise in overall energy consumption. Access to this new data allowed SEI to make this and other assessments for the first time. For instance, between 2001 and 2005 total private car mileage for petrol cars increased by 11% and mileage travelled by private diesel cars increased by 23%. Both contributed to a 17% increase in overall transport energy during the same period.

Mr. David Taylor, Chief Executive of SEI said: "Transport, and in particular car driving, has a number of negative environmental impacts. Transport is a major contributor to CO₂ emissions in Ireland and emissions from transport are growing at a faster rate than any other sector. In this context the figures announced today place more accurate information into the public domain, to facilitate a more accurate understanding of the factors affecting energy consumption in transport. The full findings of the report to be published in September will provide additional information

on energy use in Irish transport, will set a benchmark for future analysis and will serve to inform policies and measures in this important area”.

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Editors Notes:

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.