

Office of Environmental Licensing
Environment Protection Agency,
Richview,
McCumisky House,
Clonskeagh
Dublin 14.

16th October 2020

**Technical Amendment Request for Temporary Tonnage Increase to Industrial Emissions (IE)
Licence W0232-01.**

Dear Sir/ Madam

In line with the Environmental Protection Agency(EPA) Circular *“Office of Environmental Enforcement Statement of Regulatory Position with regard to compliance during the COVID-19 Pandemic”*, and following correspondence (19th of March 2020) from Dublin Waste to Energy (DWTE) and subsequent reply from the EPA (03/04/2020), and conversations with EPA personnel, DWTE is formally informing the EPA that due to the continued exceptional circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland, DWTE have received an increase in tonnages over the first three quarterly periods of 2020. As a result of the service provided by the DWTE Facility to Ireland by enabling continuous, sustainable and appropriate waste management during the first wave of the pandemic, the annual tonnage limit of 600,000 tonnes for the Facility will likely be reached on or in mid-December 2020. As a result, DWTE is seeking a Technical Amendment pursuant to section 96(1)(c) of the EPA Act 1992, as amended, to its IE Licence W0232-01 to be permitted to exceed this tonnage limit in 2020 (the Technical Amendment).

It is worth commenting that the treatment of additional tonnage will not require any modifications to the plant and will not result in the emission limit values set out in the IE Licence being exceeded.

1. Waste Acceptance rates for 2020

Annual tonnages to date for 2020 are as follows:

Q1 2020 = 163,441tonnes

Q2 2020 = 139,583tonnes

Q3 2020 = 163,654tonnes

Total End of Q3 2020 = 466,678tonnes. This is against an initial forecast of 452,000tonnes.

Without factoring in waste which the Facility may be requested to take in as a result of the second wave of the pandemic in which the country now finds itself, the forecast for the remaining quarter of 2020 is for run rates to be higher than normal due to the usual increased tonnages of waste generated over the Christmas period and the limitations associated with exporting of waste that may arise during that time. DWTE have already factored in the planned second outage for October 2020, that will mean that the acceptance of reduced tonnage from the 10th to the 31st of October. The forecasted tonnage run-rate for

2020 is in the region of approximately 620,000tonnes. In effect, it would mean the closure of the DWTE facility in mid-December 2020 as the current licence limit of 600,000tonnes will have been reached, by that point in time.

YTD (End September)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
466,678	c.38,000	c.56,000	c.56,000	c.617,000

2. Waste Acceptance rates for 2019

Intake rates for 2019 are shown below

Q1 2019 = 134,049tonnes

Q2 2019 = 158,530tonnes

Total to end of Q2 2019 = 292,579tonnes (10,445tonnes less than 2020 to end of June for the same period.)

Q3 2019 = 143,757.16tonnes

Q4 2019 = 163,577.86tonnes

Total 2019 = 599,914.60 t

It is worth noting that the average tonnages received for the two-month period of November and December for each of 2017, 2018 and 2019 was 110,000tonnes. Based on current projections and if DWTE is not granted the Technical Amendment, DWTE will only be able to accept 95,000tonnes of this 110,000tonne average during this two-month period. These figures do not factor in the waste which the Facility may be requested to take in as a result of the second wave of the pandemic in which the country now finds itself.

The DWtE Facility processes the equivalent of c. 1/3 of the country’s residual MSW. If it cannot process this tonnage amount at this time, the ‘do-nothing’ approach may well give rise to a repeat of the situation which occurred in 2019, where numerous facilities were storing waste over the Christmas period due to insufficient capacity.

3. Reasons why tonnages presented for processing at DWtE Facility will exceed 600,000 tonnes for 2020.

- DWTE receives the equivalent of c. 1/3 of the country’s municipal solid waste (MSW). The DWTE facility has been deemed by the Government to be an essential service as both an energy provider and waste treatment facility during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Regional Waste Authorities acknowledged in early May 2020 that the DWTE facility was running at higher levels than predicted due to additional volumes of waste generated as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Facility has operated during the pandemic to ensure that bunker levels are kept as low as possible so that there was always capacity to accept waste and to manage any surge that may

occur of COVID-19 Waste, if required, and residual waste in the event that the export market became unavailable and other outlets in Ireland were also unable to accept waste. Two such surges occurred in weeks 18 and 20 of May 2020 when over 14,000 tonnes of waste was accepted in each of these weeks alone.

- As an essential service provider, DWTE delayed its February 2020 outage to June 2020, and also subsequently shortened it to ensure that the Facility was fully available to accept waste (non-Covid-19 and Covid-19 if required) during the pandemic. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Regional Waste Planners were kept apprised of these measures. The benefit to the State of the Facility delaying the planning February outage was two-fold. First, it allowed additional waste volumes to be continually and sustainably processed. Secondly, it assisted in ensuring there was a stable electricity supply during the COVID-19 early period, which the State was understandably keen to secure.
- When the pandemic commenced the volume of household residual waste generated increased by **19%** due to the majority of the population staying at home (while commercial waste volumes decreased). DWTE accepts waste from all the leading household waste collectors. Consequently, as the waste delivered to DWTE is primarily household waste, there was a corresponding increase in waste delivered to the facility for processing.
- During the restrictions, skip hire by households remained high and impacted on the overall MSW figures and this was particularly evident in the cities (as confirmed by the Waste Capacity Working Group).
- When the cement kilns closed and the sector stopped accepting solid recovered fuel with very little notice for an extended period, the additional waste destined for those facilities was diverted to DWTE by waste collectors as there was no alternative outlet for it to be treated.
- The Indaver WtE facility has had a few prolonged unexpected outages since the pandemic commenced resulting in additional waste being diverted to DWTE at short notice.
- DWTE accepted treated (autoclaved) medical waste from SRCL (albeit in small volumes) thus enabling them to treat the increased volumes of medical waste generated from the hospitals and test centres. DWTE will not be able to accept this material if the Technical Amendment is not granted which could impact on the ability of SRCL to process the medical waste, which could have corresponding knock-on effects.
- DWTE incurred the cost of applying for and receiving a Technical Amendment from the EPA to accept non-hazardous medical waste to ensure that, in the event of a surge in hospital / clinical waste there would be an outlet for this waste.
- In July and August, there was an unexpected surge in residual MSW caused by the “Staycations”. DWTE continued to process this unforeseen high volume of waste.
- Finally, the waste contractors, when determining their delivery rates to DWTE for the year generally hold back some of their quotas to ensure they have capacity at the Facility for the increased volumes that arise over the Christmas period. This option will not be available to them this year due to the already high delivery rates.

4. Consequences of reducing tonnages to end of year to remain at 600,000 t.

Currently there are larger than average volumes of household MSW being generated nationally. Last week, the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) recommended a country-wide lock-down, Level 5. Also, although this recommendation has not yet been acted upon, it is reasonable to assume that the volumes of MSW generated will continue to increase due to the second wave of the pandemic. A reduction in tonnage accepted by DWTE on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to compensate for the increased volumes of waste received in the first three quarters of 2020 will create backlogs of MSW at facilities regionally. While it is not the responsibility of DWTE to ensure this backlog is minimized, the processing of additional waste volumes by DWTE indirectly facilitates compliance across the entire waste sector, i.e. by enabling waste transfer stations to clear their waste reception areas daily, thereby reducing odour and other potential nuisances at waste transfer facilities, as the DWTE facility is the critical final destination for this MSW that is being generated.

In the event that DWTE is not granted the Technical Amendment and is unable to accept and process the anticipated volumes of waste in the final quarter of 2020, the surplus waste would have to be dealt with by the following options:

- **Temporarily stored at waste management facilities:** This is not a practical or desirable option due to the inevitable environmental pollution and human health risks associated with the decomposition of the organic fraction of the waste.
- **Export to over-seas facilities:** This can prove difficult to procure as contracts need to be agreed and the time required to arrange the necessary trans-frontier shipment documentation can be quite long. Furthermore, exporting waste rather than treating it at source is a breach of the principles of self-sufficiency and proximity under the Waste Framework Directive.
- **Disposal at Landfills:** Waste disposal by landfilling has detrimental consequences for human health and the environment and prevents economically viable waste materials being recovered through proper waste management (such as energy from waste) in line with the waste hierarchy. Use of landfills should therefore remain the exception and be avoided where at all possible.

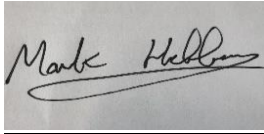
It is also worth repeating that the DWTE facility is recognized as an essential service provider by the Government. Curtailing the tonnages which can be accepted and processed at the facility for the final quarter of 2020 could have further impacts on the community particularly during the continuing global pandemic and the approaching Winter/Christmas period.

These are extraordinary times and DWTE is engaging and informing the Agency of the expected additional volumes of waste which will be generated and which the Facility will be asked to accept over the Christmas period. It is also anticipated that even more additional volumes of waste will be generated as a result of the second wave of the ongoing pandemic and the potential increased restrictions nationwide. Again, it is expected that the Facility will be asked to accept these additional tonnages. For all of the reasons set out above, we are therefore making this Technical Amendment request to increase the permitted tonnage

through the Facility temporarily to 620,000 tonnes, so that the projected additional volumes can be continually and sustainably processed, and so that the much less environmentally sound alternatives of exportation and landfill are avoided. Please find attached an Appropriate Assessment carried out to support this TA request.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for any further information you may require.

Yours Sincerely,



Mark Heffernan,
Environmental Manager,
Covanta Europe Operations Limited,
For and on behalf of
Dublin Waste to Energy Limited.

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