

Campaign Pack Winter 2007

Cut Excess Packaging



This campaign pack contains

- A checklist of actions
- A briefing note containing facts & figures
- Model press release
- Model focus story
- A suggested petition on packaging
- Sample letters to supermarkets and trading standards offices
- Suggested photo opportunities and artwork

If you would like more advice, or have any problems, queries or campaign success stories please contact Jo Swinson MP on swinsonj@parliament.uk



LIBERAL DEMOCRATS • CAMPAIGNS DEPARTMENT
TRAINING • SUPPORT • STRATEGY • CAMPAIGNS • ELECTIONS

Produced by the Liberal Democrat Campaigns Department with Jo Swinson MP



PACK DESIGNED FOR ANYWHERE IN UK

Excess Packaging

We must
act now!

Excess packaging is fast becoming a massive issue, and for good reason.

UK households send over 5 million tonnes of waste packaging to landfill every year.

As well as the cost to the environment, the cost of this packaging makes up one-sixth of the average annual household budget - £470!

This pack will give you the tools to launch your local campaign to let supermarkets and trading standards know that local people are fed up with their wasteful ways.

Use the checklist to make sure that you are doing everything you can to make this a campaign that they can't ignore.

Happy campaigning!

Your Action Checklist

- Take suitable photographs to use throughout the campaign
- Issue local press release(s) launching and giving updates on the packaging campaign
- Launch a petition on packaging, collect signatures and send these on to local supermarkets
- Use packaging stories to support the campaign in Focus leaflets
- Write to local supermarkets and trading standards offices to raise the excess packaging issue
- Set up websites and use existing sites to promote the campaign, including www.scrapthispack.com
- Raise the issue with other campaigners in your area and discuss joint campaigning

Applicability

To help show where this campaign pack (and future campaign packs) can be used, please check for the flag on the cover and on individual pages (in some cases).

Please email any queries to shaun.roberts@libdems.org.uk



Shows that the material is approved for use in England



Shows that the material is approved for use in Wales



Shows that the material is approved for use in Scotland



Shows that the material is approved for use throughout the United Kingdom



Excess Packaging Briefing

the campaign

Packaging is increasingly under the spotlight of media and public debate. As well as Jo Swinson's campaign, other campaigns against wasteful packaging are being run by the Women's Institute, The Independent, numerous local councils, local papers, residents' associations and others.

Jo Swinson's Early Day Motion attracted cross-party support from 179 MPs in the 2006-07 session of Parliament. The motion has been re-tabled for the new session.

A motion on packaging was presented to Lib Dem Federal Conference in September 2007. The motion, *Taking Action to Tackle Excess Packaging*, called for:

- New legislation giving consumers the power to deposit packaging in stores before leaving for recycling
- Amendments to strengthen existing packaging regulation to assist Trading Standards officers
- The creation of a national body to tackle large-scale producers of excess packaging
- A deposit scheme to be put in place for plastic carrier bags. In addition, the motion was amended to allow that consideration be given to a plastic bag tax
- The introduction of binding packaging reduction targets in place of the current voluntary Courtauld Commitments

Jo Swinson also presented a Private Members Bill, entitled *Packaging (Reduction) Bill*, to Parliament on 23rd October 2007. The Bill included measures based on those in the conference motion (above). The Government did not allocate the Bill sufficient Parliamentary time before the end of the 2006-07 session for it to proceed further than the presentation stage.

the facts and figures

- Consumers are paying three times over for excess packaging:
 - 1 cost of the unnecessary packaging at the checkout
 - 2 increased council taxes and landfill taxes
 - 3 environmental cost of more waste going to landfill for years to come
- Families now spend £470 on packaging each year, 1/6th of their household food budget
- UK households send around 5 million tonnes of packaging waste to landfill each year
- More than 17 billion plastic bags are given away by UK supermarkets each year
- Total domestic waste produced in Britain has increased 21% since 1997, to over 26 million tonnes;
- household recycling in the UK has increased from 6% to 23%, but this has only managed to keep pace with the total increase in waste
- The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations govern what constitutes acceptable packaging, but since these were introduced in 1998 there have been just 4 successful prosecutions for excess packaging
- According to the Local Government Association, council tax payers are facing fines of up to £3 billion if we do not dramatically reduce the amount of waste thrown into landfill
- In November 2006, DEFRA Minister Ben Bradshaw advised food shoppers to leave excessive packaging at the tills to force action on the issue of excess packaging.



Model press release

A press release could cover a number of angles:

- Launch of the packaging campaign
- Launch of a petition against excess packaging
- Collection of X petition signatures
- Letters to local supermarket and trading standards office

Date:

Contact:

Local campaigner tackles supermarkets over excess packaging

Local campaigner [name] is aiming to make supermarkets in [location] think twice before stocking excessively packaged goods.

[Name] will today launch a campaign to highlight the need to tackle excess packaging on products ranging from perfume to pizzas. UK households send over 5 million tonnes of waste packaging to landfill each year.

[name] said:

“Like many other consumers, I am appalled by the wasteful packaging that accompanies so many everyday products. Shockingly, one-sixth of the average household food budget – £470 – is spent on packaging.

“In addition to the financial cost to consumers, there is the environment damage caused by waste packaging sent to landfill. Too little is being done to force supermarkets and producers to cut back on their excessive use of packaging.

“That is why I am launching a campaign against excess packaging in **[campaign location]**. I will be contacting local supermarkets, trading standards officers and members of the public to highlight this issue of growing concern. Producers of excess packaging must get the message that people in **[campaign location]** are fed up with their wasteful ways.”

ENDS



**Template letter to local
Trading Standards
office manager**

Your Name
Liberal Democrats
Address
Phone / Email

Date

Dear Sir/Madam,

Excess packaging

Excessive packaging of consumer goods is an issue of widespread concern. The public is increasingly aware of the environmental reasons for minimising packaging, and increasingly frustrated by the volume of packaging that can often be accumulated during a simple trip to the supermarket.

As the local trading standards officer for **[area name here]**, you will no doubt be aware of the role played by Trading Standards in policing producers of excess packaging. You will also be aware of the challenges involved in this role. The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations set out what are legally acceptable forms of packaging, but on the evidence I have seen, they are not working effectively. Producers can too easily negotiate their way through the regulations and make use of packaging that is clearly excessive. We are reminded of this every year at Easter time, when supermarket shelves are filled by large boxes containing often modestly-sized chocolate eggs.

I would be grateful to be informed of how many cases of excess packaging **[area name here]** Trading Standards has pursued, and how many you are currently pursuing. I would also be interested to know which of the cases you have taken up have resulted in prosecutions, resolution through mediation or have been resolved in other ways. Further, have all the cases you have encountered been raised with Trading Standards by concerned individuals, as opposed to a more systematic policing of excess packagers having taken place?

Trading Standards has an extremely important role to play in policing those producers who are not adhering to existing packaging regulations. However, without tougher, tighter rules on packaging, it is being prevented from properly fulfilling this role. I would be very interested to know whether you concur with this assessment of the current situation.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely,

[signature]

[Your Name]



Template letter to local supermarket

Your Name
Liberal Democrats
Address
Phone / Email

Date

Dear Sir/Madam,

Excess packaging

Excessive packaging of consumer goods is an issue of widespread concern. The public is increasingly aware of the environmental reasons for minimising packaging, and increasingly frustrated by the volume of packaging that can often be accumulated during a simple trip to the supermarket.

Government figures have indicated that families now spend £470 on packaging each year, while an estimated 17 billion plastic bags are given out annually by supermarkets in the UK. As manager of a busy supermarket serving the local community, you will no doubt be aware of the importance of these issues and the need for action to tackle the problem of excess packaging and excessive plastic bag use.

I would be grateful to be informed of the steps your company is taking to minimise packaging, either directly on your own brands or by influencing the producers whose products you sell. Further to this, what initiatives are in place in your individual shop, as distinct from your company, to promote a minimal approach to packaging? With regard to disposable plastic bags, is this a particular area of concern for **[supermarket name here]** and if so what is being done to reduce plastic bag use?

Excess packaging is just one of a range of environmental challenges we face, but I strongly believe that significant improvements on packaging can be yielded with relatively modest action. By tackling excess packaging, we can help to protect the environment and bring financial benefits for consumers.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely,

[signature]

[Your name]

Anytown FOCUS

Delivered free to your town and surrounding areas

It's so close here!

Lib
Dem
??%

Con
??

Can't
win here

Only the Lib Dems can
beat the Conservatives
here in Anytown.

Lab
??

Cut excess packaging in x town

Liberal Democrat [Campaigner title/name] is leading the campaign against excess packaging in [your town].

Concerned about levels of excess packaging on products in local shops and supermarkets, [name] has launched a petition calling for a reduction of excess packaging and the re-use of shopping bags.

[name] said:

"Too often, a simple trip to the shops can lead to the accumulation of huge amounts of waste packaging. Not only are consumers being forced to dispose of more packaging than they need, they pay for it too.

"As well as the obvious environmental benefits of sending less waste to landfill, cutting down on excess packaging has financial benefits for consumers.

"The petition I have launched calls for large retailers in



[location] to adopt a green approach to packaging by cutting excess packaging from products stocked where possible, encouraging other producers to

reduce excess packaging and the re-use of carrier bags."

Returned petitions will be sent on to supermarkets in [location].

Cut Excess Packaging Petition

I / we the undersigned, urge supermarkets in [location], to adopt a green approach to product packaging by cutting excess packaging from products stocked where possible, encouraging other producers to reduce excess packaging and encouraging the re-use of carrier bags.

Name:

Address

Email

Postcode

Return to: Freepost address



If you return this form the Liberal Democrats and their elected representatives may use the information you have provided to contact you from time to time about issues we think you may find of interest. Some of the contact may be automated. You can opt out of some or all contacts at any time by contacting us.

Suggested photo opportunities

Try using the following photo ideas to support the campaign:

- With examples of excess packaging purchased from local supermarket, e.g. shrink-wrapped vegetables or pastries packaged in plastic



- With a particular product demonstrating excess packaging
- With a particular product demonstrating good use of packaging

- With 'used' packaging, i.e. with contents removed, to be disposed of
- With recycling boxes and bin bags containing packaging waste



- Outside local supermarket
- With a local family exhibiting the amount of excess packaging they have to dispose of

