



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



19 October 2010

Request for submissions on proposed new inspection and monitoring system for septic tanks and other on-site wastewater treatment systems

Dear Consultee,

On 29 October 2009, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled against Ireland in relation to the disposal of waste water from septic tanks and other on-site wastewater treatment systems. The ECJ ruling highlights deficiencies in existing Irish legislation and to address the ruling, new legislation is required to provide for:

- the setting of standards for the performance and operation of all septic tanks and other on-site wastewater treatment systems, and
- the monitoring and inspection of the performance of such treatment systems.

A task force, chaired by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and comprising representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the local authorities and the National Rural Water Services Committee, is now inviting submissions from stakeholders regarding the development of performance standards for septic tanks and other on-site wastewater treatment systems and on the arrangements for the inspection and monitoring of those systems to ensure compliance with the ECJ ruling. The task force has developed draft performance standards and observations are now sought on these standards. It is intended that, following the conclusion of this consultative process, the performance standards will be finalised and the task force will then advise the Minister on the legislative measures required to comply with the Court ruling.

It is intended that the legislation will also set out the responsibilities of households served by on-site systems, including, inter alia, requirements to maintain their system correctly, to have it regularly serviced as well as requirements to carry out remedial works where necessary.

Enclosed for your consideration are the following:

1. A copy of the draft performance standards for septic tanks and other on-site wastewater treatment systems undergoing inspection;
2. A questionnaire to assist you in framing your submission;

3. A list of the organizations invited to make submissions.

Electronic versions of these documents are available on request.

The task force invites you to consider these documents, to complete the questionnaire and to submit your views regarding the proposals. If you consider that there are organisations or stakeholders that should be consulted on this matter and who are not listed among the invited consultees, please let the undersigned know as soon as possible so that they can be invited to participate in the consultation process.

Please note the following:

- ❖ Submissions should be sent by post to the address shown below, or by email to xxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.x for receipt by close of business on **Friday 26th November 2010**. Requests for electronic copies of the consultation documents may also be submitted to this email address.
- ❖ Submissions should include the name of your organisation, address and contact details (a telephone number, fax number or email details).
- ❖ Responses to the consultation programme will form an integral part of the drafting of the new legislation required. It is intended that the proposed new legislation will be grounded in the widest range of views and fullest information available. Although all responses will be considered carefully, the Department will not reply to individual submissions.
- ❖ In the event of a request being made by any person under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, it may be necessary for the Department to disclose any or all comments received – the Department may refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. The comments received regarding this matter may also be published in the form of a report by the Department. Any personal data you provide will be handled appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

Yours Sincerely,

Tony Keogh,
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