The UK Packaging Manufacturing Industry
- *a brief for MPs & Peers*

- The UK Packaging Manufacturing Industry wishes to thank all MPs and Peers who have supported the industry in the past year.
- In addition, we thank all other political representatives, both national and local who have taken the time to understand the fundamental role that packaging plays in enabling modern lifestyles

Some key information on our sector and its products:

- Our industry employs some 85,000 people in the UK – representing 3% of the UK manufacturing industry workforce – and has sales in excess of £10 Billion.
- Productivity is more than double that of all industries' average performance.
- As major recyclers and users of recycled material as well as producers of packaging**,** the sector has contributed to raising the UK's packaging waste recycling record from 28% in 1998 to some 65% in 2008, thereby catching up with most of our major European partners.
- Lightweighting of packaging in the supply chain has been happening for decades. Developments in packaging in recent years have enabled a decoupling of packaging growth from GDP growth. In the last eight years, the amount of packaging used in the UK has increased by 3% whilst in the same period, GDP has grown by 17% and household expenditure by 20% and last year there was reported to be no increase at all in the weight of packaging used.
- Packaging is not sold to consumers. Packaging is only used where products are sold and acts as a delivery system, in conjunction with modern distribution systems, for products. Demand for packaging is directly linked to consumer demand for products.
- So, packaging exists because consumers and modern lifestyles exist. In an era where consumers expect to buy the widest range of goods 24/7, this can only be achieved through packaging which contains, protects and preserves the product.
- At a time when the cost and availability of food is a major political focus, modern packaging and distribution methods in the UK enable food wastage in the supply chain to be at very low levels (3% in the UK compared to more than 40% in Russia/India etc.)
- The total environmental impact of packaging (including its recycling and disposal) is substantially less than the collateral environmental damage that would arise from wasted product if the packaging was not used.
- Less than 3% of landfilled waste is packaging waste. 18% of household waste is packaging. "Avoidable" household food waste is greater and, because of embedded energy and methane from landfill decomposition, has at least **15 times** the environmental impact of packaging waste.
- Across their full lifecycle, the environmental difference between glass, metal, paper and plastics packaging is tiny compared with the environmental savings they provide by protecting goods and food. The use of recycled materials – commonplace for decades in glass, metal and paperboard packaging – is now extending more widely to plastic packaging.
- The mismatch (lack of joined-up thinking) between Local Authority waste targets and those imposed on us by the EU Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive is continuing to threaten progress beyond current recovery/recycling rates of 65% **-** and even challenging existing levels

PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT…..

We ask our MPs to support us on the following issues to stop any further erosion in our UK manufacturing base and also to ensure that packaging manufacture is not "exported" outside of Europe to more "carbon intensive" economies:

- **Greater recognition of the pivotal role of packaging in protecting products and providing safe and secure food, drink and other product supply chains**
- **Recognition for our industry's valuable contribution to the UK economy with ~£10Bn. T/O, and 85,000 employees.**
- **Support for action on ensuring a level playing field across Europe in the cost and supply of energy. For most of our industry, energy costs are significantly greater than average profit margins.**
- **Understanding that carbon impact starts with consumer demand for products and services. Pursuing a low carbon economy by "squeezing" manufacturing without addressing consumer carbon demand will lead to substantial manufacturing job losses but greater global carbon as manufacturing moves out of the UK and Europe and goods are produced in "higher carbon" lower cost economies**
- **Recognition for our environmental achievements generally – and particularly the progress made on recycling & decoupling packaging growth from GDP**
- **Seeking a balanced debate based on sound research and facts for any further calls for discriminatory taxes and bans on specific packaging material and products**
- **Supporting the need for better cohesion between Local Authority and Producer Responsibility recycling targets**
- **Recognition of the need for far more National guidance on waste/resource management strategies so that choices made locally are in the context of a Resource Efficiency framework that benefits our society as a whole**
- **Understanding that, as a "service industry" within a supply chain, our products are produced to meet ultimate consumer demand.**
- **Acceptance that we are in no sense complacent about the need to continue progress on reducing the environmental footprint of packaging – but recognising that the scale of focus on packaging is wholly disproportionate to its true environmental impact as evidenced by the facts.**

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