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23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008.

Dear Mr Guiomard,

Sincere thanks for the opportunity to voice an opinion on the review of Travel Trade Legislation in Ireland.

I have been in business for the past 21 years in a small agency in Donegal. Until two years ago I was part of the ITAA group bonding scheme and the most dreaded part of the year was not November and December when turnover dropped, rather it was every February when the process began for renewing the licence. Even with leaving the ITAA and securing a bond from an insurance company, the red tape has lessened but the pressure is as great.

That aside, I strongly believe that the public should be protected and that a fund should be in place solely for that purpose. However, considering that there are so many internet companies, airlines and travel providers who have no bond in place it is unfair that travel agents should be forced to be bonded so heavily.

You probably will not agree with this suggestion but if a very small levy were imposed on every person leaving an Irish airport, say two or three euros, you would soon amass a very substantial fund to cover not only people booked by travel agents, but those booked on line and directly with airlines and the likes!

I actually think that travel agents should still require a licence to trade as there needs to be some standards in place to keep out rogue traders and to ensure that proper practices are in place. It is not the actual obtaining of a licence that is difficult, it is the procuring of a bond each year that makes the process such a pain.

It also seems grossly unfair that travel agents have such a burden placed upon them every year to put a large bond in place whilst millions of euros are changing hands between the travelling public and transport providers who have absolutely no protection in place at all!


I only employ twelve people and in a rural community those jobs are vital. The fear of not being able to satisfy the commission in relation to bonding requirements each year impacts on every staff member. They know the pressure that I am under and they know that if I do not come up with the bond their jobs are at risk.

I am impressed that you have actually taken the time to look at this issue, and have further taken the time to meet with the agents, and I hope that you will follow through on this issue to a favourable conclusion.

I was disappointed to have missed the recent meeting between the travel agents and yourself. I was abroad on business and unable to attend. I expect that other agents voiced similar views to those I have voiced above.

I leave the matter in your capable hands and trust that you will endeavour to find a fair and acceptable solution with the minister for Transport.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deirdre Grant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'D'.

Mrs Deirdre Grant  
Driftaway Travel.