



Introduction

Ireland's soils need your help. We rely on soil to provide healthy food, clean water, support wildlife, store carbon, prevent flooding and ultimately maintain livelihoods around the country. But over the last half a century Ireland's soils have come under increasing pressure from land use changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion and overgrazing, disposal of organic wastes to soils, afforestation, industry and urbanisation. Soils are not a renewable resource so when we lose them they are gone. Because of this we need to protect them. We are asking people to sign a petition calling for protection measures to be brought in Ireland and across Europe.



Soil

Soil is a remarkable substance that turns unusable materials into plant food, it stores carbon, filters water and protects us from floods. Soil is formed from thousands of years of physical and biological processes and, as it takes so long to re-form, it is effectively non-renewable. Because it is not renewable and we rely so heavily on it we need to protect it.



Food

The degrading of Ireland's soils is a threat to our ability to produce food now and into the future. Food security and livelihoods are at risk if we allow the condition of our soils to continue to decline.

Flooding

Soil compaction and erosion means that when it rains the land holds less water and this can lead directly to flooding. Studies have shown that soil compaction can increase the rate of instant run off from 2% of all rain that falls on land to 60%.

What we are calling for

We are calling for the European Union to create a Soil Directive which would make countries protect soils. Currently there are similar directives which protect water, air and nature. Protection for soils at European level would see the government have to assess the condition of Ireland's soils and take action where needed. This could take the form of incentives for farmers to improve soils.



The petition is an official European Citizens' Initiative. The aim is to get 1 million signatures from 7 different member states of the European Union as this will then invite the European Commission to propose legislation to protect the soil.

Visit our website To sign the petition environmentalpillar.ie/people4soil



Who are People4Soil?

People 4 Soil is a free and open network of European NGOs, research institutes, farmers associations and environmental groups. We are very worried about the increasing degradation of soils both in the EU and at global level.

In Ireland the group is made up of environmental organisations, organic growers, farmers, researchers and people concerned with the future of food production.

Here are some of the Irish organisations involved:

The Environmental Pillar - a coalition of 28 national environmental NGOs.

Celt - the Centre for Environmental Living and Training

The Organic Trust

The Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association

East Clare Community Cooperative

The Hedge Laying Association of Ireland

Mayo Organic Group

UCD Research Group

Sonairte

Fruit Hill Farm

Kinsale College

The Organic College

Leitrim Organic Farmers

National Organic Training Skillnet

Organic Growers of Ireland

Mayo Abbey Training Centre

Enrich Environmental Ltd

Community Garden Network

Skeries Allotments

Growing

Anu Green Designs

Stop Food Waste

Just Forests

Zwartbles Ireland

Glor na Mara Ecological Initiative

Cork Environmental Forum

Earthly Matters



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STOP
TREATING
SOILS
LIKE
DIRT

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