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2 August 2019

His Excellency Moon Jae-in
President of the Republic of Korea
president@president.go.kr

His Excellency Cho Myung-rae
Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea
mepr@korea.kr

His Excellency Dong-man HAN
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
Philippines@mofa.go.kr

Your Excellencies,

Subject: Re-Export of 5,177 Tons of South Korean Waste in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

Greetings from the Ecological Waste Coalition of the Philippines, Inc. (EcoWaste Coalition), a national network of over 140 public interest groups working toward the envisioned “zero waste and toxics-free society where communities enjoy a safe and healthy environment.”

We write to urge the South Korean government to undertake immediate re-exportation of the 5,177 tons of illegal bulk waste exports from your country that are still in the Philippines despite the agreement reached between the two governments to have these wastes repatriated to their origin.

Last 13 June 2019, at a bilateral meeting held at the Mindanao Container Terminal (MCT) Complex in the municipality of Tagoloan, province of Misamis Oriental, the Korean panel led by Mr. Young-Dae Jeong, Director General, Environmental Management Bureau, Ministry of Environment, agreed that “the Government of Korea in accordance with its existing laws, rules and regulations shall start the shipping procedure from the Port of Tagoloan to Korea ***as soon as possible***” (underscoring ours).

Over 45 days have lapsed since the said meeting and we see no progress in the re-exportation arrangements for the misdeclared plastic synthetic flakes that arrived in the MCT on 21 July 2018. One year has already gone by and the illegal waste shipments are still waiting to be shipped back to South Korea.

You will recall, as stated in the press release issued by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines in November 2018, “the Ministry of Environment on November 21 initiated legal procedure to have the wastes in question in the Philippines be brought back in accordance with Article 20 of the Law on Cross-border movement and Disposal of Wastes—Prior Notice of Repatriation Order—and embarked on investigation of the violation of Article 18-2 of the said law—False Export Declaration.” The press release also mentioned that “relevant authorities of Korea will have the wastes in question be repatriated and properly disposed and work to prevent recurrence of the problem.”

In line with the assurance made by your government that “it would take measures to have the wastes in question be brought back to Korea as soon as possible,” we call upon your government to immediately act on this pressing issue and not allow the controversy to drag on like what happened to the infamous garbage from Canada that finally left the Philippines last 30 May after six long years.

Consistent with our role as an environmental health and justice watchdog group, the EcoWaste Coalition will monitor your government’s re-importation of the said illegal waste exports from South Korea in line with the provisions of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal. In defense of our people’s right to a balanced and healthful ecology as guaranteed by our Constitution, we will oppose all forms of foreign waste dumping into our shores and will resist plans to have the 5,177 tons of South Korean waste landfilled or incinerated in the Philippines.

We thank you very much for treating this matter with urgency, and we look forward to celebrating the departure of the illegal waste cargoes from South Korea to their origin.

Sincerely yours,



Aileen Lucero
National Coordinator
EcoWaste Coalition