



## **Sahabat Alam Malaysia** **Friends of the Earth Malaysia**

For Environmental Justice

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**Press Statement**

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### **No to False Solutions to Deal With Unrecyclable Plastic Waste**

The global plastic dumping under the name of recycling and trade has become epidemic with severe consequences. Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is gravely concerned that the Malaysian government is resolving the deluge of imported plastic waste that cannot be recycled by “burning” these wastes.

The Housing and Local Government Ministry was quoted stating that they are looking into the possibility of turning plastic trash as an alternative fuel and source for producing cement. A local company called The Asher, which uses “pyrolysis plasma” technology to incinerate plastic waste has also approached the Ministry.

The Malaysian government must not be deluded with these false solutions and instead take measures to prohibit the burning of plastic waste, whether in waste incinerators, in cement kilns, in make-shift furnaces as fuel, or in plastic-to fuel operations, in the open and landfill fires. This is because the plastic waste burned will result in toxic emissions and toxic ashes which further spreads the harm to the environment and threaten public health.

Four years ago SAM had protested the burning in cement kiln of imported waste converted into processed engineered fuel. We had demanded the importing company, Resourceco Asia, to send back all the solid waste which was imported from Australia to the origin country. This is the very technology that the Malaysian government is now considering to clear the unrecyclable plastic wastes that have flooded our country.

Why should our communities host polluting disposal technologies and be exposed to pollution from burning of other countries waste?

Are emissions from cement kilns continuously monitored by the government or are our communities being subjected to these dangers from the emissions? Even the best of air pollution control technologies may not be able to trap all the toxic gases.

Waste burning or incineration releases a range of pollutants to the air, water and soil. The air emissions include carbon monoxide, greenhouse gases, acidic gases (NO<sub>x</sub>, Sulfur dioxide, HCl), dioxins, furans, heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium depending on the type of waste that is fed. Direct and indirect exposure to such substances, including through inhalation of contaminated air, direct contact with contaminated soil or water, or ingestion of toxins that enter the food chain can have adverse health impacts affecting the neurological, immune, reproductive and endocrine systems.

As burning waste in any form has adverse effects, we urge the Malaysian government to study various options to deal with the plastic waste problem. In the interim the residual plastic waste should be stockpiled safely until an option which safeguards public health and the environment is found.

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Sahabat Alam Malaysia