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Feature Column

Noise Control Policy in Taiwan

The Noise Control Act was revised last year to bring about a quieter living environment for the residents of Taiwan. Since then the EPA has revised regulations concerning noise control zones, announced a list of noise pollution sources that the public may encounter, strengthened guidance on reducing noise volumes from noise pollution sources, improved the traffic noise inspection system, and improved the effectiveness of handling noise-related complaints.

Noise and bad odors make up 60% of all public nuisance complaints. Noise pollution is particularly a problem in Taiwan as the island is small and heavily-populated, new construction projects are a regular feature of life, and commercial and residential zones are commonly intermixed. Under such circumstances, the need for an effective noise control policy is a top priority.

Revised Regulations Clarify Authorization of Traffic Noise Management

In recent years the EPA has begun enforcing control over low-frequency noise pollution originating from places of entertainment and business premises. In addition, on 3 December 2008, revisions to the Noise Control Act (噪音管制法) were announced

and the EPA set about the task of drawing up related bylaws, particularly concerning the responsibilities of transport operators and management authorities toward reducing traffic noise. A new provision now allows members of the public to report excessive noise pollution from modified vehicles, a problem that seems to be getting larger by the day. Repeat offenders will be offered advice on how to reduce the amount of noise their vehicles create. It is hoped that these efforts will lead to a reduction in the overall number of complaints received.

Observation of international trends regarding noise pollution control at the household level reveals that most countries make it a part of product testing standards, whereas environmental protection agencies tend to initiate controls to address noise generated by

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certain premises, machinery or other noise sources in the human living environment. Taiwan sets controls on noises generated by factories, construction sites, or business premises much the same as is done in the US, Japan, the EU and other developed countries.

The Noise Control Act outlines the responsibilities of transport operators and management authorities toward reducing traffic noise and stipulates that improvement plans or subsidized plans must be implemented for sections of road or areas where noise levels exceed the limits laid out in the Act. If improvement plans or subsidized plans are not submitted within a notified period, or are submitted but not implemented, fines will be levied.

In recent years the EPA has been receiving an increasing number of complaints regarding low-frequency noise emitted by water cooling towers and motor-driven water pumps. In order to effectively deal with low-frequency noise problems, on 1 July 2005, Taiwan became the first nation in the world to start enforcing low-frequency noise restrictions, starting with factories and construction sites.

The latest revision also increases the scope and severity of the restrictions. For example, Article 8 now requires that all local governments publicly announce a list of behavior restrictions, while Article 9 requires that local governments provide a list of standard controls for business premises, construction sites, and other facilities. The behavior restrictions stipulate

which activities are to be prohibited, during which times, and in which areas within the administrative jurisdiction of each local government; the standard controls, by contrast, will vary according to the different categories of noise source, area, and time of day.

Providing an Effective Platform for Communication and Noise Reduction

Another major objective of the latest revision to the Noise Control Act is to create a platform for investigating complaints relating to excessive noise, offering guidance and suggesting practical ways in which improvements can be made. The EPA's annual statistics revealed that over 50,000 noise-related complaints were lodged in 2007, which was an increase of 10% on the previous year. Since noise pollution is a special case of a physical nuisance that does not leave physical evidence, and degrees of tolerance toward excessive noise varies widely between individuals, the EPA is still finding it difficult to satisfy all complainants even when inspections reveal noise sources to be in compliance with standards. This, unfortunately, can result in complaints being submitted twice or even more.

In order to effectively deal with complaints and assist parties involved in finding a solution to their noise problem, since the beginning of 2006 the EPA has been using a specially-designed guidance platform to deal with repeat complaints. The platform facilitates



▶ *Strengthening controls on automobile noise*

communication between noise creators and aggrieved parties under the guidance of experts and scholars who go to the scene to offer in-situ advice. This system has been employed in over 200 cases to date.

New noise-control measures that are currently being promoted include:

1. Promoting the quietness logo:

On 24 March 2009, Taiwan's first quietness logo was unveiled. Much creativity has gone into designing an easily-recognizable logo for the purpose of educating the general populace as to the need to maintain silence in designated indoor quietness zones. The logo was reported by media organizations and the response was both significant and immediate. To date, such institutions as the National Palace Museum and the Taipei County Library have started to display the logo on their premises.

2. Testing indoor sound volumes

Excessive indoor noise is gradually being recognized to be a problem that detracts from an acceptable quality of life. Many developed nations around the world are formulating standards and specific testing methods to control indoor noise pollution. Taiwan is no exception: In recent years, testing and public opinion surveys have been carried out in hospitals, libraries, and in mass rapid transit and high-speed railway stations. Survey results show that noise pollution in public libraries is usually created by antiquated air-conditioning units; while in hospitals the problem is one of people talking too loudly. The EPA recommends library and hospital managers to implement their own noise control measures. In the future it will be considered whether or not to draw up suggested values for indoor noise levels in order to reinforce controls.

3. Compiling metropolitan noise pollution maps

In keeping with governmental policies in Europe and North America, this year the EPA started using the latest European technology to draw up maps of noise pollution hotspots in the cities of Taipei and Kaohsiung. These digital maps can be regularly updated to display where the hotspots are at any given time. They have proven to be an invaluable aid

to controlling noise pollution and reducing the number of complaints received. The maps have also proven useful in predicting and evaluating the influence of extraneous noise pollution sources.

4. Tightening noise restrictions on vehicles

As for loud noises from vehicles with modified engines and illegal drag racing, roadside inspections have not proven to be 100% effective in eliminating the noise pollution problem. The revised Noise Control Act allows citizens to report modified vehicles in the same way they would report vehicles that produce excessive exhaust emissions, through the EPA website, by fax, or by mail. To date, there have been over 10,000 hits on the relevant EPA webpage, and as of October 2009, approximately 400 vehicles have been reported for excessive noise.

In the process of promoting noise pollution controls a number of bottlenecks have been encountered. Much thought has gone into finding suitable solutions to the problems, such as:

1. Action is taken only when a noise complaint is filed, and pro-active inspections are rare:

Many noises fade over time and with increased distance from the source. Different people also have greatly different levels of tolerance toward noise pollution. As a result, current noise pollution control regulations tend to support action only when a noise complaint is filed, rather than actively initiating inspections. In the future, the EPA will be encouraging local environmental protection bureaus to more actively engage with operators of major noise pollution sources listed under their jurisdiction and offer guidance on improvements that can be made to reduce the number of noise-related complaints.

2. Effective noise control is being hampered by a lack of funding and manpower:

Some local governments currently only have an inspection manpower of 0.5 persons and are thus unable to adequately fulfill their duties. Allocated funding is also below the levels needed to cover existing and newly-added requirements (such as purchasing low-frequency noise meters). The EPA hopes to address these shortcomings by pushing the heads of local authorities to pay more attention

to tackling the noise pollution problem by allocating sufficient personnel and funds from local government budgets.

3. Varying individual noise tolerance levels leading to repeat complaints:

While complainants are encouraged to initially seek assistance from the guidance platform, for cases involving special noise complaints the EPA also collates information on non-prosecutory (such as mediation and fines) and prosecutory options.

Expanding the Scope of Controls to Ensure a Peaceful Environment

Revisions and additions were made in 2009 to regulations covering the noise control standards that all local environmental protection bureaus now enforce and the working guidelines for establishing noise control zones. Also added or revised were the Motor Vehicle Noise Control Regulations, the Motor Vehicle Noise Control Standards, and the Management Regulations for Handling Reports of Motor Vehicle Noise Pollution.

As for the problem of aviation noise, 12 additions and revisions have been made to date to the Civil Aircraft Noise Control Standards and the Noise

Control Regulations for the Premises, Construction Projects, Facilities, Motor Vehicles and Aircraft of Military Authorities and their Subordinate Units. Expanding the scope of noise controls and rolling out new supplemental noise control measures have been instrumental in reducing transportation noise and slowing the increase in the number of noise-related complaints received.

Besides continuing the policies outlined above, the EPA will also be introducing some new ideas supporting the slogan "Creating quieter communities and a peaceful environment," which is at the hub of national noise prevention policy. Some measures that will be adopted to ensure residents enjoy quieter neighborhoods include:

- a) Re-evaluating designated noise control zones and adjusting their size if necessary
- b) Announcing and controlling noise pollution sources that disrupt everyday life
- c) Improving the guidance and advice given to owners of noise pollution sources
- d) Thoroughly enforcing the inspection and improvement of transportation noise sources



▶ Water pumps are often a source of low frequency noise

International Cooperation

Minister Shen Speaks to International Community, Taiwan Receives International Affirmation of Carbon Reduction Efforts

EPA Minister Stephen Shu-hung Shen recently visited Burkina Faso, one of Taiwan's west African diplomatic allies, to attend the Seventh World Forum on Sustainable Development in the capital Ouagadougou on 9 October 2009. Minister Shen was given the honor of delivering a fifteen minute keynote opening speech at the first session as well as a three minute conclusion. Shen also spoke at the Heads of States Segment.

Minister Shen spoke primarily on the following topics:

1) The desire of African nations to take advantage of clean development and sell emission credits on the carbon trading market to fulfill the growing economic and welfare needs of African nations as well as assist in international efforts to mitigate global warming.

2) Taiwan has voluntarily set targets and schedules for reducing CO₂ emissions to their 2008 level during the period from 2016 to 2020, to their 2000 level by 2020, and to half their 2000 level by 2050. Being the first non-Annex I country to announce such reduction schemes attests to the fact that Taiwan is not only working hard to raise the quality of life of its residents but is also mindful of the need to fulfill obligations as a member of the global village. Taiwan's efforts to reduce carbon emissions are already bearing fruit but concerted international cooperation is needed if lasting progress is to be made. It is hoped that the differentiations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change between Annex I countries and developing countries, especially with the commitment of many African nations to cleaner production plans, will lead to targets being met. Minister Shen reiterated that Taiwan is ready and able to work on many levels with governmental or corporate entities in Africa to assist in drawing up feasible clean development mechanism (CDM) plans.

3) Taiwan understands the requests of African nations for the Copenhagen negotiations to result in the lowering of participation thresholds and the streamlining of CDM rules. Taiwan hopes that these requests will be granted at the plenary session in Copenhagen.

4) The first and utmost principle of sustainable

development is to resolve international disputes between different countries, races, religious or political parties in peaceful and democratic ways. Taiwan and China are now cooperating on many issues of mutual concern, and Taiwan believes that relations will improve even more if both sides respect each other's right to an active role on the international stage.

On October 10, Minister Shen cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the 2009 Taiwan Industrial Technology Exhibition, also held in Ougadougou, and met with a number of Burkina Faso's leading political figures including Premier Fertius Zongo and Environment Minister Salif Swadago. Premier Zongo and Minister Swadago took the opportunity to thank Taiwan for its assistance over many years and also promised to continue offering diplomatic support to Taiwan's attempts to gain full participation in international organizations and events. Minister Shen also attended a state banquet hosted by the president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore.

This year's forum was attended by representatives of over 60 countries and well-known international organizations, including some heads of state, environmental ministers and other luminaries in the field of environmental protection. Minister Shen took advantage of this rare opportunity to address large gatherings of leading international figures three times in three days. This greatly enhanced Taiwan's visibility on the international stage as many left with a far greater understanding of Taiwan's role in international affairs. Taiwan particularly won plaudits for voluntarily setting carbon emission reduction targets, a further boost to the nation's international eco-image, and it was even suggested that other nations could follow the Taiwan model.

Environmental Monitoring

Monitoring Environmental Quality on Taiwan's Southernmost Territory in the Spratlys

An EPA monitoring team recently visited Taiping Island (one of the Spratly Islands) and the neighboring marine territory to conduct air and seawater quality tests. This was the first time environmental testing had been carried out on Taiwan's southernmost territory, making the voyage a symbolic milestone of great importance.

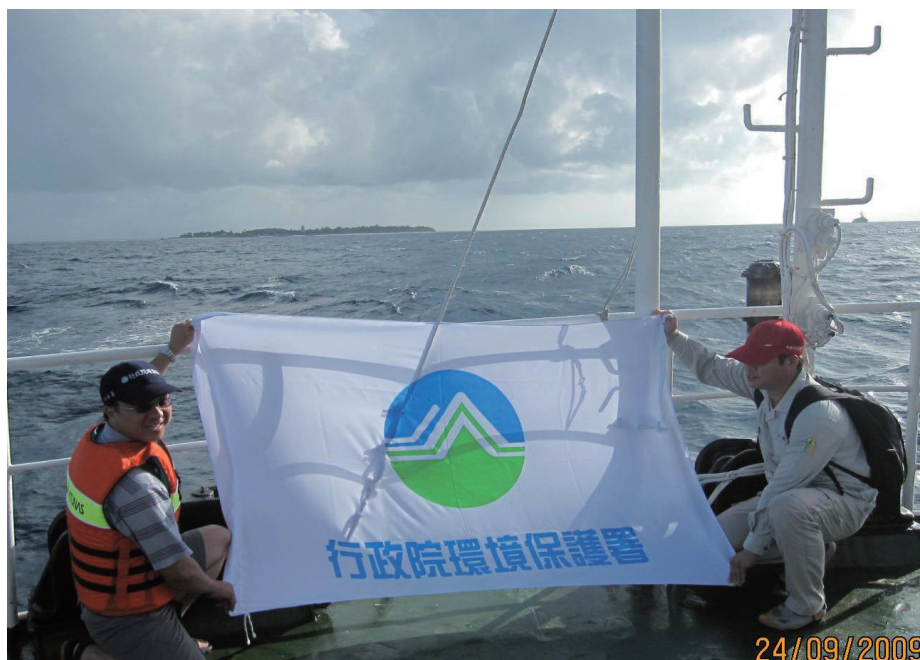
On 21 September 2009, with the assistance of the Coast Guard Administration, an EPA monitoring and sample-collecting team took a transport carrier to Taiping Island and the neighboring marine territory to conduct air and seawater quality tests. The 7-day return voyage was the first time that environmental testing had been carried out on Taiwan's southernmost territory. The voyage was a breakthrough of no small significance in that it extended the spatial and technological limits of environmental monitoring and put Taiwan's environmental monitoring data on track with international protocol, showing Taiwan's commitment to global environmental protection.

The monitoring team not only landed on Taiping Island to take samples but also took samples from different sites on the way back. This form of "linear monitoring" provided information that will be of great help to furthering the international community's understanding of environmental quality in the South China Sea and the long-distance transmission of airborne pollutants in Southeast Asia.

The long-distance transmission of airborne pollutants and marine pollution are two issues that have come under intense international scrutiny in recent years. In Southeast Asia, the annual burning of immense amounts of agricultural waste and areas of forest from July to September, along with increasing amounts of industrial emissions, has led to a serious air pollution problem. Vast swathes of this polluted air are blown northwards by the prevailing southwesterly winds and have a noticeably negative effect on Taiwan's environment.

The Spratly Islands lie along the transmission path of airborne pollutants, and since the islands are uninhabited they make an excellent location for accumulating the environmental monitoring background data necessary to make meaningful comparisons. The monitoring team headed for Taiping Island, the largest island in the Spratlys, which lies some 1,600 km south of Kaohsiung between the Indochina Peninsula and the Philippines.

Testing was carried out for a long list of items. In



▶ A boat with equipment for monitoring and testing samples taken from Taiping Island and other islands.

terms of air quality, these included: Atmospheric mercury, VOCs, carbon dioxide, and methane. Items on the water quality test list included: Water temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, suspended solids, chlorophyll a, ammonia nitrogen, nitrate nitrogen, nitrite nitrogen, phosphates, silicates,

cadmium, chromium, mercury, copper, zinc, lead, and others. The results are available for viewing on the following EPA webpages: <http://taqm.epa.gov.tw/taqm> (for air quality) and <http://wqshow.epa.gov.tw/> (for water quality)

Water Quality

Wastewater Management Regulations under Revision to Improve Industrial Zone Effluent

Wastewater sewer systems in industrial zones are different from those used in ordinary business premises. The EPA has issued a preannouncement of revisions to wastewater prevention measures in order to more effectively manage the treatment of effluent and improve the quality of water discharged from industrial zone.

Under current water pollution control regulations, wastewater sewer systems of all types are covered by the Water Pollution Prevention Measures and Test Reporting Management Regulations. However, the wastewater sewer systems in industrial zones are different from those in ordinary business premises. Effluent should first be pre-treated in the factory to comply with stated minimum value restrictions and then mixed with pre-treated effluent from other factories in a main collection pipe that transports all pre-treated effluent to a joint wastewater treatment plant. After another round of treatment in the plant, the wastewater is discharged into a local body of surface water. Although management regulations for the zones differentiate between different categories and levels of industry, the water pollution regulations do not take into account the fact that the effluent from all of the industries ends up mixed together in the main collection pipe. This is the main reason for the upcoming revision of the regulations.

With technological advancements in the continuous automatic monitoring of water quality and in data transmission, it is now possible to make continuously updated information on water quality available online. This is of great benefit in reassuring the public as to the quality of wastewater discharged from industrial zones. A new set of average maximum value restrictions have also been drawn up as a part of the latest revision to the wastewater standards that were announced on 28 July 2009. The introduction of the new values is in keeping with trends in effluent control and will make it easier to control the quality of wastewater in industrial zones. Regulations governing the continuous automatic monitoring of water quality

have been issued to industrial zone authorities so they have a set of benchmarks to refer to.

The part of the revisions that refers to the management of collective effluent states that it is the responsibility of the drainage system management authorities to ensure that the existing system functions smoothly. The relevant authorities are also to instigate inspections of factories in the zones to ensure that pre-treatment facilities are in good working order and are being operated properly. The authorities will also be responsible for periodically checking the quality of effluent in feeder pipes and will also be charged with conducting evaluations and reviews of the capabilities of all facilities that treat water both piped into or out of the factory. They will also be responsible for formulating and submitting voluntary drainage system management plans should the EPA decide in the future that levels of pollutants in wastewater need to be even lower, and for carrying out the plans once they have been reviewed and approved by the EPA.

Revisions referring to the continuous automatic monitoring of water quality and combined discharge now require that operators of permitted wastewater discharges of over 10,000 CMD that have passed environmental impact assessments install water meters on both inlet and discharge pipes. In addition, discharge pipes must also be fitted with instruments to automatically monitor water quality (temperature, pH, conductivity, COD, SS, and any other parameters set by the EPA) and video monitoring systems. The resulting data and images shall be transmitted via Internet to the EPA for review. Operators who have been fined three times or more in a year by zone

management authorities because their sewer systems have violated the Water Pollution Control Act will also be subject to the above requirements.

The EPA predicts that enforcement of the new regulations concerning the management of collective effluent will force management authorities of industrial zones to take a more thorough and proactive approach to managing the effluent discharged by

the factories under their jurisdiction. The EPA also points out that the installation of automatic monitoring equipment and combined discharge will also have a positive impact on the quality of effluent discharged by allowing for real-time warning alerts, for immediate emergency response, and for water quality data to be made open to the public as appropriate.

Waste Management

EPA and MOEA to Strengthen Reuse and Management of Furnace Slag

There has recently been much concern expressed by legislators over the management of reusable furnace slag. The EPA has thus promised to work with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to draw up a set of proscriptive regulations to ensure that furnace slag does not get put into the ground in drinking water source areas.

In order to reinforce controls over the reuse of industrial waste, the EPA has added some wording to Article 39 of the draft revision to the Waste Disposal Act. The new provision, which is currently being reviewed by legislators, states that any industrial waste for reuse that has the potential to be harmful to human health or the environment must be dealt with according to Articles 28 and 41 of the Act, after consultations have been held between the central competent authority and the central industry competent authority to determine the category of waste in question. The EPA is also assessing whether five types of industrial waste – including furnace slag – are harmful to human health or the environment. If the test results show this to be the case then the Ministry of Economic Affairs will be asked to remove these items from the list of permitted reusable industrial waste.

The EPA met with all of the relevant authorities to discuss appropriate reuses for industrial waste and will be paying particular attention to the management of reusable furnace slag to ensure that it is not

improperly reused in the future. In fact, controls of the reuse of furnace slag were tightened after the Ministry of Economic Affairs announced revisions to the Ministry of Economic Affairs' Categories and Management Methods for Industrial Waste on 27 April 2009. It is now illegal for harmful furnace slag to be reused at all, and furnace slag in general cannot be used as fill for construction projects on agricultural land. The revisions clearly detail the limitations to the use of furnace slag as fill for construction projects on non-agricultural land. The EPA is working closely with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to ensure that furnace slag does not get put into the ground in drinking water source areas.

Other measures that the EPA is implementing to ensure that the reuse of industrial waste is appropriately managed include requiring operators to register, send in periodic reports online, and to install GPS in all vehicles that transport such reused waste. The EPA will also be regularly sending out inspection teams to check that the regulations are being adhered to.

Recycling

Promoting Recycling of Disposable Cups

The EPA is currently discussing with the operators of beverage stores the possibility of formulating regulations that will require the stores to have recycling bins for disposable cups on the premises. Such bins would be another useful link in the recycling chain and would reduce the proportion of disposable cups that end up as litter.

Many residents of Taiwan are very much in the habit of buying takeaway drinks from beverage chain stores, using around 780 million disposable cups annually in the process. More and more members of the public and citizen's groups have been complaining that too many of these cups are not disposed of properly and end up as litter that blocks drains or floats down rivers and gets washed up in unsightly piles on riverbanks and coasts. The EPA is thus looking to reinforce recycling measures to reduce the number of disposable cups that are despoiling the environment.

These cups are made from paper, polypropylene, or polystyrene, all of which are listed as mandatory recyclables and should be binned along with other recyclables. There are also ten major categories of retailer's that now must have bins for disposable containers and used batteries on their premises for the convenience of their customers. These include

wholesale stores, supermarkets, cleaning and cosmetic product retailers, convenience stores and fast food chains.

The impact of disposable cups on the environment is considerable due to the huge volume of disposable cups used and the fact that many consumers buy drinks on the spur of the moment. If there isn't a recycling bin at hand, people may well throw the used cup on the ground. The EPA has therefore decided to use the model that has already proven effective with the ten big retailers. It will soon announce regulations requiring beverage stores to have recycling bins on their premises. These bins will be another convenient recycling conduit for consumers of takeaway drinks. The EPA will soon be formulating operating procedures based on the regulations, and will then call a public hearing to discuss the procedures with the relevant operators. It is expected that implementation details will be finalized by the end of the year.

Air Quality

NT\$3,000 Subsidy Extended for Electric Assist Bicycles in 2010

The EPA has pre-announced revisions to the Management Regulations for Subsidizing the Purchase of New Electric Assist Bicycles. This means that the subsidy of NT\$3,000 for each EPA-approved electric assist bicycle purchased will still be available in 2010.

The management regulations originally stipulated that the subsidy scheme was to expire on 30 November 2009. However, in order to further encourage members of the public to buy the eco-friendly electric assist bicycles, the regulations have been revised to allow the program to be extended until 30 November 2010 (the latest date acceptable on a receipt of purchase). The subsidy must also be applied for by 31 December 2010 at the latest. The management regulations also stipulate that the subsidy must be discounted from the purchase price at the time of purchase by the local manufacturer (or the local agent for imported bicycles). These

new revisions fulfill a number of purposes: to ensure that the scheme fits in with the recent abolishment of the unified certification system for profit-seeking enterprises; to prevent government employees from submitting multiple applications for vacation subsidies and electric assist bicycle subsidies; and to shorten the time that applicants have to wait before receiving subsidy monies.

Details of the preannouncement are posted on the EPA Web site: <http://share1.epa.gov.tw/epalaw/index.aspx>

Ecolabeling

Tighter Green Mark Standards for Recycled Paper

The EPA has recently revised the regulations governing standards for recyclable paper products that can carry the EPA's Green Mark. Applications for Green Mark certification must now be accompanied with certification from either the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the EU's Pan European Forest Council (PEFC) proving that the paper pulp was derived from trees planted specifically for pulp rather than from old-growth forests.

To earn the EPA Green Mark a product must accord with one of three main eco-friendly themes—recyclable, low-polluting, or resource-conserving. Each tonne of recycled paper is the equivalent of saving 20 trees from being chopped down. There are currently 80 paper products that have been awarded the Green Mark. They fall into the following 4 main categories: recyclable office paper, toilet paper, packaging paper, and stationery and writing paper made from recycled paper. The proportion of recycled paper in these 80 products ranges from 40~100%. However, 10~60% of the content of recycled paper is still derived from raw pulp. Regulation to minimize the content of raw pulp is necessary to protect species from extinction, prevent soil erosion, and mitigate climate change.

The FSC and the PEFC are currently the two main international organizations providing certification for forestry products, which is why these revisions will require paper product manufacturers to get certification. Manufacturers will also be required

to provide information on amounts of unprocessed wood or pulp that they buy, and prove that they are only using wood or pulp from planted forests rather than abetting in the destruction of old-growth forests. Planted forests also have a long period of carbon sequestration, which helps reduce global warming.

The EPA is working to get the revisions announced and implemented as quickly as possible, and will be asking manufacturers to be proactive in submitting applications. It is hoped that more and more consumers will come to see protecting the planet as a personal responsibility and will opt to buy paper products carrying the Green Mark whenever possible. As for the overall program of promoting sales of Green Mark products, the EPA is continuing to encourage both government agencies and private corporations and groups to buy them whenever possible. The EPA is also offering guidance regarding the establishment of Green Stores to improve product range and ease of purchase.

Climate Change

"Computer Energy Saver" Free Download to Help Save Electricity

The EPA has recently completed the development of "Computer Energy Saver" software. This software allows users to set energy conservation functions on their computers so their computers can be part of "Energy Conservation and Carbon Reduction to Cool Down Earth" initiatives. The software is available to download for free by registering on the EPA Web site (<http://ecolife.epa.gov.tw>).

The EPA points out that currently most computers have energy conservation functions that can be set by users so that when the computer mouse or keyboard are not in use for a period of time, it turns into sleep mode to save energy.

The EPA's "Computer Energy Saver" software can help users automatically detect and set the computer's energy saving functions so that users need not go through the complicated steps normally required. Moreover, this software helps users calculate time spent using the computer, how many kilowatt hours were used, and CO₂ emissions.

The Computer Energy Saver currently comes in two versions for single computers and for entire offices. Once the personal computer version is installed, it automatically sets your computer's sleep function and has the option of displaying ten important things

you can do in your life to conserve energy and reduce carbon. The office version is suited for companies, schools, or organizations as it allows speedy setting of all linked computers and can be set according to regular office hours. For example, it can be set to let computers automatically go into sleep mode at noon, remind workers to turn off their computers as the end of the workday approaches, and automatically go into sleep mode at ten o'clock in the evening.

The EPA states that according to 2007 statistics from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, there were 11,290,000 personal computers in use nationwide. If each computer saves two hours of electricity use (assuming each PC uses 120 Watts per hour), Taiwan could save 990 million kilowatt hours each year. Based on the Ministry of Economic Affairs' Energy Bureau statistics for carbon emissions from electricity generation in

2008 (0.638kg CO₂ per kWh), this small measure could reduce CO₂ emissions by 629,000 tonnes.

News Briefs

Noise Control Fee Standards Announced

On 30 October 2009, the EPA announced noise control fee standards according to Article 34 of the Noise Control Act (噪音管制法), listing fees for different applications, to come into effect on 1 January 2010. A review fee of NT\$2,500 will be charged per application to operate facilities likely to produce noise. A basic application review fee is set for those applying for approval, continuation, extension or revision of motor vehicles noise test certifications. A fee of NT\$2,000 will be levied per application of noise compliancy verification. Applications for continued use, extension, or revision of prior certification will cost NT\$1,200. Further details can be found online in the regulations section of the EPA Web site (<http://share1.epa.gov.tw/epalaw/search/LordiDispFull.aspx?ltype=05&lname=0170>).

Protecting Community Rights with Standardized Wastewater Treatment Contracts

Sewer systems have been established in 3,155 communities hooking up about 780,000 residences throughout Taiwan. Due to varying technical standards for most commissioned wastewater treatment enterprises or utility companies, contracts frequently omit certain information or are otherwise vague. Communities are often unclear about operating responsibilities of contractors and have no way to ensure effective operation of facilities. To protect the rights and interests of communities that commission these operators, the EPA has issued a standardized model form for community wastewater treatment service contracts. In order to provide accurate knowledge on the management of community wastewater treatment facilities, the EPA has compiled an operations management manual including a standardized contract form. This is available for download from the EPA Web site.

Battery Recycling Subsidy Fee Rates Revised to Encourage Greener Products

Waste battery recycling rates have increased in recent years along with a growing demand for rechargeable batteries. In order to encourage businesses to use

environmentally friendly batteries in place of highly polluting batteries and strive for further advancements, the EPA has adjusted battery recycling, clearance and treatment fee rates for manufacturers and importers as well as subsidy fee rates. The revised fees comply with the polluter pays principle and encourage appropriate recycling and treatment of spent batteries to protect the environment. The adjusted fees in this draft revision are posted online in the regulation preannouncement section of the EPA Web site (<http://share1.epa.gov.tw/epalaw/index.aspx>).

EIAs for High-Tech Industrial Park Development to Follow EU REACH System

To ensure high-tech industrial park factories appropriately use and manage chemical product information, the EPA will require factories setting up in industrial parks to comply with the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) system during the environmental impact assessment review process. Apart from handling registration procedures, all factories generating, importing or using over one tonne of chemical substances per year are required to obtain ECHA factory and materials code numbers from raw materials suppliers. All factories are to comply with the REACH system and failure to do so will result in penalties according to the Environmental Impact Assessment Act.

Polysilicate Iron Coagulant Listed as Drinking Water Treatment Agent

In response to fluctuating water source water quality, the EPA has announced that polysilicate iron coagulant can be used as a drinking water treatment agent. Simple use of coagulants containing aluminum are unable to effectively eliminate turbidity and the risk of aluminum remaining in water. The EPA has thus announced its intention to add polysilicate iron coagulant as a legitimate drinking water treatment agent for tap water companies to consider when selecting treatment agents. The enactment of this new regulation will be pre-announced following standard procedures.

Activities

EPA Minister Shen: APEC Nations Should Heed Coastal Area Adjustment Measures

From 14-15 October 2009, the EPA held the "Tenth APEC Roundtable Meeting on the Involvement of the Business/Private Sector in the Sustainability of the Marine Environment" in Taipei, inviting APEC member nation representatives including Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan public and private sector experts to attend. The meeting discussed marine resource conservation issues and how to strengthen

government and private sector cooperation.

During his opening remarks EPA Minister Shu-hung Shen stated that coastal environments should be managed in a comprehensive manner, noting Taiwan's recent experience with Typhoon Morakot in August with serious erosion and driftwood clogging up river mouths. The driftwood caused considerable environmental pollution of Taiwan's coasts and ports as well as jeopardized the safety of ship traffic. Future management strategies should work to curb impacts by developing a more

comprehensive picture including forest, river, and coast management. Minister Shen pointed out that global warming will increase the frequency of extreme climate events, making it worthwhile for APEC members to consider and cooperate on adaptation measures.

Experience Sharing through National Toxics Accident Response Case Study Forum

On 3~4 November the EPA held the 2009 National Toxics Accident Response Case Study Forum, to help government disaster prevention agencies, aid agencies and toxic chemical handlers advance their prevention management and to strengthen exchanges in the area of emergency response technology. EPA Minister Shen presided over the meeting, inviting over 500 experts from various fields to discuss related issues. Safety and Sanitation Technical Center Director Li Zheng-xian spoke on "Foreign Chemical Quality Management System Development and an Introduction to the EU Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) System," and the EPA presented the "National Toxic Disaster Joint Prevention Organization Promotion and Introduction of Operation Case Studies." The forum introduced the EU chemical quality management system and the newly set REACH regulations, as well as reported the status and accomplishments of the EPA's toxic joint prevention network.

The forum selected different accidents that occurred in Taiwan this year to undergo study and evaluation. Accident officials were invited to deliver reports to remind others in their field to strengthen prevention of leaks and spills.

EPA Holds "What's Next? Triple E!" International Recycling Forum

Responding to the international emphasis on environmental directives toward product recycling and reuse regulations and green supply chains, the EPA held the 2009 Resource Recycling International Forum from October 20 to 21. Experts and scholars from the US, Japan, Germany and other countries were invited to discuss perspectives of environment, economy and product ecological design. They also discussed how to transform the danger of electrical and electronic waste into a new opportunity for economic development. This

year's forum takes "What's Next? Triple E!" as the core theme, fusing "Electrical and Electronic Equipment" with "Environment, Economy and Eco-design." The three main topics of discussion were, "Recycling Resources to Create Green Opportunities," "WEEE Recycling System: Current Status and Future Development," and "Developing City Minefields to Create WEEE High Value-Added Industries."

19 Companies Awarded for Outstanding Performance in Waste Reduction

The EPA held the "2009 Outstanding Performance Awards in Industrial Waste and Renewable Resource Disposal and Resource Reduction, Recycling and Reuse" on 21 October 2009. A total of sixteen companies earned the extraordinary performance award and three companies earned the outstanding performance award.

Among this year's award recipients, Chi Mei Optoelectronics was applauded for turning 95% of its waste into resources. Chi Mei's Factory B reduced enough waste to save over NT\$66.6 million, while UMC's Fab8A plant maintained an 86% water recycling rate throughout plant operations, saving over NT\$29.8 million and reducing CO₂ emissions by 9,729 tonnes per year. Changhong Composting Plant researched equipment to treat coconut shell waste and a two-stage biofilter bed to reduce odors and deodorize tanks, not only solving environmental pollution problems but also putting waste reuse concepts into practice.

"R GO GO" Recycling Mascot Chosen

The EPA held a series of resource recycling and environmental creativity activities to select an environmental mascot, including a lucky draw for all contest entries. The mascot was recently selected and lucky draw winners have been announced. The EPA chose the mascot "R GO GO" (sounds like "a-go-go" dance) and awarded twenty lucky draw winners. Contest results are posted on the EPA Web site (<http://recycle.epa.gov.tw/>).

The creator of "R GO GO" mascot, Mr. Yeh Hsing-pu, came up with this buoyant character in hopes that environmental protection actions become as second nature as dancing.

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