

China establishes environmental-capacity alert system

The Chinese government announced Wednesday that it had built an alert system to monitor regional environmental and resource capacity conditions, and punish those responsible for environmental damage.

Regions with serious environmental and resource capacity overloading will not be allowed to start new projects, according to a document issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council Wednesday.

The new system will divide environmental capacity conditions into three levels: overloading, near overloading and not overloading.

Meanwhile, based on actual resources or environmental losses, regions facing capacity overloading will be issued with a red or orange alert, while regions close to capacity overloading will be issued with a yellow or blue alert.

Regions whose environmental capacities are without excessive pollution and resource loss will be labeled green non-alert zones.

For red-alert areas, government authorities will stop granting approval on relevant projects, while enterprises causing severe environmental and resource destruction will face punishment, including fines, production restrictions and shutdowns.

Deadlines will be set for these regions to improve local environmental capacity conditions to below the red-alert level.

Individuals, such as owners of polluting enterprises or those in local authorities with slack supervision, will be held accountable for the environmental damage and even be prosecuted for criminal liability.

The government will also work to provide compensation to green non-alert zones for their ecological protection efforts and development rights, as well as increasing green financing support.

The document also put forward detailed management measures for specific fields such as water resources, land resources and the marine environment.

China has said "no more" to economic growth at the price of the environment, by putting environmental protection at the top of the agenda to ensure greener, more sustainable development.

The country has introduced action plans to fight air, water and soil pollution and rolled out its harshest-ever environmental protection law.

An ecological "red line" strategy will also be implemented to put certain regions under mandatory and rigorous protection.