

China working to ban foreign garbage

China customs said Tuesday it will work closely with other departments including border defence, coast guards and environmental protection agencies to stop foreign garbage smuggling.

In the first half year, China customs seized more than 260,000 tonnes of solid waste in 146 cases, according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC).

More than 70 percent of cases since 2013 occurred in the Bohai Rim, the Yangtze and the Pearl River Deltas, according to GAC spokesman Zhang Guangzhi at a press conference.

By the end of 2017, China will have ended imports of solid waste that cause great environmental damage and raise public concern, according to the State Council, China's cabinet.

The State Council plan came after China notified the World Trade Organization last week that it will ban imports of 24 types of solid waste, including plastics, unsorted paper, textiles and vanadium slag by the end of 2017.

China started to import solid waste as raw material to make up for the domestic shortage of resources in the 1980s, but some companies illegally smuggle foreign garbage into the country for profit, damaging the environment and public health.

The government is stepping up the fight against pollution and environmental degradation as decades of fast growth have left the country with smog, polluted water and contaminated soil.

China's medium-sized and large cities imported 47 million tonnes of solid waste in 2015, down 5.3 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP).

On July 1, the MEP began a campaign against imported waste processing, with 60 teams of inspectors conducting investigations.