

## EPD and United States collaborate on successful prosecution of illegal export of hazardous electronic waste to Hong Kong (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been working in close collaboration with international law enforcement agencies to combat illegal hazardous waste import and export activities and to jointly carry out monitoring and law enforcement work, a spokesman for the EPD said today (April 26). The spokesman cited a recent case in which the EPD's provision of evidence through collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Justice resulted in the successful prosecution of the illegal export of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) to Hong Kong from the United States. On April 11, a federal court in Chicago sentenced the concerned recycling operator in the United States to three years' imprisonment and a fine of over US\$1,200,000 for illegally exporting hazardous e-waste, together with other charges including fraud and tax evasion.

The spokesman said that in April 2011, the EPD, with the assistance of the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, intercepted a container, which was claimed to contain scrap metal, from the United States at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. After inspection, it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising around 200 waste cathode ray tube monitors and television sets as well as around one tonne of waste batteries. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted hazardous e-waste to the United States and notified the United States Environmental Protection Agency about the return shipment for their follow-up investigation.

The relevant enforcement agencies in the United States later contacted the EPD for assistance, and with the EPD's provision of relevant evidence through the Hong Kong Department of Justice, they were able to bring the recycler concerned to justice. The spokesman stressed that the EPD would continue to work in collaboration with international law enforcement agencies to jointly combat illegal hazardous waste import and export activities.

The EPD has intercepted a total of 30 cases of illegally imported hazardous waste from the United States since 2016. In addition to notifying the relevant overseas law enforcement agencies about each case for their follow-up action at source, the EPD has also successfully prosecuted 12 importers after collecting sufficient evidence. Other cases are either under investigation or scheduled for trial.

