

EPD collaborates with Malaysian environment authority to detect illegal transboundary movements of waste

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD), through cross-border collaboration, successfully detected a case of illegal export of waste electrical wire, aluminium waste and copper waste from Hong Kong to Malaysia. The exporter concerned, Fortune Int'l Enviro-Resources Limited, was convicted and fined \$28,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (February 2) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

A spokesman for the EPD said the department has been maintaining close contact and exchanging intelligence with overseas law enforcement agencies with a view to jointly combating illegal transboundary movements of waste. Last October, the EPD received a report from the Malaysian environment authority regarding the illegal export of waste to Malaysia by a Hong Kong exporter. The EPD immediately conducted an in-depth investigation with the assistance of the Malaysian environment authority in the collection of evidence. It was confirmed that the exporter concerned illegally exported a shipment of about 23 tonnes of waste, purported to contain "metal" but actually containing waste electrical wire, waste aluminium, waste copper and other waste. The EPD thus initiated prosecution against the exporter under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that, in accordance with the WDO, anyone intending to import or export waste metals, including aluminium waste and copper waste, should obtain a permit issued by the EPD, unless such waste is uncontaminated and is imported or exported for the purposes of recycling, reprocessing, recovery or reuse. Otherwise, it will constitute an offence. In addition, exporters should comply with the relevant laws and regulations of the importing countries, including obtaining prior approval from the relevant authorities of importing countries. The EPD will spare no efforts to collaborating with overseas law enforcement agencies to combat illegal waste import and export activities, with a view to preventing Hong Kong from becoming a distribution hub for illegal import and export of waste or the disposal of imported waste at Hong Kong landfills.

The spokesman reminded importers and exporters of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export controlled waste. According to the WDO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment; for subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.