

Food delivery firms in China face white pollution charge



Three leading Chinese takeaway food delivery companies – Ele.com, waimai.baidu.com and meituan.com – have been accused of producing excessive white pollution across the country. [Xinhua]

The rise of the food delivery service has aroused deep concern among conservationists over the excessive use of throwaway packages, which some experts have estimated increases by a volume equal to the 6.4-square-kilometer West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, every 15 days.

Recently, the Green Volunteer League in Chongqing sued three popular food delivery companies – Ele.com, waimai.baidu.com and meituan.com – for their lavish use of indissoluble plastics as food containers.

The hearing of the lawsuit has been underway in Beijing No.4 Intermediate Court since September 1.

The case, first of its kind in China, involves an accusation that the three companies have failed to diversify the choices of food containers away from plastic packaging for their customers.

The plastic boxes they use in handling a combined total of 200 million orders on average each day, could cover 420,000 square meters, an area equivalent to 59 football fields.

According to the League, the prevalent use of disposable snack boxes and plastic bags by the three companies violates “the plastic limitation” order

ratified on June 1st, 2008.

This prohibited use of plastic bags thinner than 0.025 millimeters and imposed charges when they used to pack customer orders at supermarkets, wholesale markets and shopping malls.

According to the prosecutor, the lawsuit seeks to constrain the rampant consumption of plastic products, for which, the three food delivery suppliers are reluctant to impose a charge.

The League has demanded a public apology from the three companies and asked them to accept accountability and cover the costs of damage they have caused to the environment.

The conservationists believe the major cause of land pollution is due to the snack boxes made from the component known as polypropylene (PP), which needs more than 30 years to decompose after being dumped in burial pits. Meantime, not enough attention is being paid to using boxes made from eco-friendly corn starch, which is easy to degrade.

Therefore, the league calls for joint efforts by the three companies, customers and authorities to put an end to the sweeping expansion of white pollution.

The three food delivery companies have yet to comment on the issue.