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LEGITIMATE RECYCLERS ARE COMPLIANT

Focus should be on better managing plastics. Blanket bans are unsustainable.

Legitimate recyclers already comply with 18 stringent rules and regulations. Legal recycling factories are closely monitored and require approvals from various agencies including the Department of Environment (DOE) and Jabatan Pengurusan Sisa Pepejal Negara (JPSPN).

Legitimate recycling plants have invested in equipment and machinery that can safely handle clean, homogenous plastic scrap materials. In our certified, regulated facilities, these materials are recycled in an environmentally sound manner as required by the Basel Convention.

The industry also has accepted the imposition of the RM20 per tonne levy to help defray the cost of enforcement including port inspections of containers. This levy is in addition to complying with the 18 new stringent rules and regulations that came into force after the *sampah plastik* controversy blew up in 2018.

Only clean homogenous recyclable scrap material can be imported and only in a controlled and regulated manner. The Basel Convention amendment which took force in January 2021 regulates the transboundary movement of plastics recyclable materials. Only certified exporters are permitted to ship these materials. They must declare these shipments to the Customs and Competent Authority (CA) of the exporting country which must then notify or get approval from DOE in Malaysia. The shipment must be inspected at the port of entry before it is moved to a qualified recycling plant.

Sampah plastik that is soiled and contaminated cannot be shipped to Malaysia without DOE's prior consent. Legitimate recyclers do not import or use *sampah plastik*. Legal recyclers use clean, homogeneous recyclable materials as classified under the Basel Convention, for example, industrial scrap from the manufacture of car bumpers. These materials are then turned into recycled plastics pellets that would be used to make another product. *(Photos of clean, homogenous recyclable materials for reference are provided below).*

Well-regulated under the Basel Convention, the import of clean, homogenous plastic scraps will not have detrimental effects on the environment. Because these scraps are clean, there is no contamination discharged into the environment. Because these scraps are valuable and costly, no recycler would dump these scraps into rivers or landfill.

Plastics is widely used in numerous sectors: automotive, electrical and electronics, construction, medical, packaging, agriculture and many more. Currently applications of alternative materials are limited to a few niche products. The reality is that it is unsustainable to eliminate all types of plastics from our daily lives. In this regard, a blanket ban is not viable. Malaysia should therefore focus on managing plastics in a more sustainable manner, rather than completely banning its production and usage.

The Malaysian plastics industry acknowledges that plastics pollution is real and action must be taken expeditiously. Systemic changes involving many stakeholders are needed, especially where boundaries of responsibility are unclear.

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The way forward is to develop a circular economy which reuses instead of discarding materials. This can be done through developing a more comprehensive waste management system, not just locally but globally. With better waste management solutions and policies, plastic materials will be captured for recycling or properly disposed of and not end up in the environment.

MPMA and MPRA is firmly committed to the principle that plastics do not belong in the environment. Plastics should be used responsibly, reused and recycled. Without the recycling sector, Malaysia will not be able to develop into a sustainable economy and create new value to benefit society and environment.

Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association

Malaysian Plastics Recyclers Association

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Photos of Imported Plastic Scraps



Picture 1: PMMA Skeleton

These PMMA Skeletons are clean homogenous scraps from making acrylic items such as COVID19 barriers for offices and classrooms, and are 100% recyclable. PMMA is a lightweight or shatter-resistant alternative to glass. It can be reground, melted and extruded into new items.

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Picture 2: PS Skirt Trim left over from the manufacture of packaging items such as food containers, lids and blister packs can be recycled into materials for the production of thicker sheets to make sturdier nonfood packaging related parts such as vehicle door inside panels, sports equipment and dunnage trays used in transport.

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About MPMA

The Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association (MPMA), established in 1967, is a progressive trade association providing leadership and quality service to its members and the plastics industry with due care to the environment. MPMA is the official voice of the Malaysian plastics industry, representing its members and the industry in Government interaction, spearheading the plastics industry's growth and providing the platforms to assist members to be globally competitive. One of MPMA's current focus is on plastics and sustainability whereby activities involve communication, education and public awareness. MPMA currently has about 800 members comprising Ordinary members, which represent about 60 percent of plastics manufacturers in the country and account for 80 percent of the country's total production of plastics products.

About MPRA

The Malaysian Plastics Recyclers Association (MPRA) was formed in 2014 to spur the growth of the plastics recycling industry, enhance integrity and engage with Government and regulators. MPRA aims to keep members informed of industry developments in order to stay globally competitive amid the recent growth of the plastics recycling industry and the increasingly sophisticated operating environment. MPRA plays a key role in building a sustainable platform for the plastics recycling industry and supports sustainable practices and education.

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