

Source: *New Straits Times*

Firms which dump toxic waste face court action, loss of clients

PUTRAJAYA: The government will come down hard on companies that dump scheduled or toxic waste indiscriminately, especially near residential areas.

Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk S. Sothinathan said not only would the companies be taken to court but they would also be made “to lose their clients”.

He added the government had decided to go “one step further” to teach errant companies a lesson.

Citing the case of a Kuala Lumpur based company found to have buried 170 drums of paint sludge, a scheduled waste, in Tiroi, Negeri Sembilan, a few days ago, he said its clients who were mainly foreign investors would be informed of its wrongdoing.

“We will write to these multinationals and tell them what the company has done. Preliminary investigations showed that most of its clients were multinationals who are very conscious about the environment.

“I am sure they will not like a service agent who flouts the rules and laws of this country. I am also sure that these companies have their own environmental ethics and they definitely do not want to be implicated in any way,” he said at a press conference at his office yesterday.

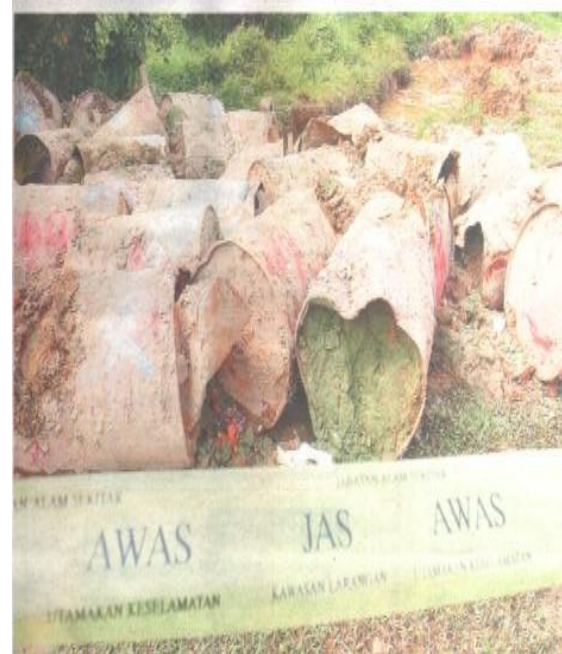
He added that the company directors or owners would be among the first few to be charged under the amended provision of Section 34B of the Environmental Quality Act.

The amendment, which came into force early this month, carries stiff penalties against offenders.

Under the section, anyone found guilty of dumping scheduled waste will face a mandatory jail sentence of up to 5 years or fined RM 500,000, or both.

Sothinathan, who would be visiting the dumpsite, said the site was expected to be cleared by the weekend. The company would be made to bear the cost of clearing the site and disposal of the drums.

He was puzzled why companies still resorted to illegal dumping of toxic waste.



The drums of paint sludge buried in an estate in Tiroi will be taken to Kualiti Alam’s scheduled waste storage facility in Bukit Nanas.