



**For immediate release**

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## **Stop Being the Dump Site: Environmental Activists Remind Jokowi**

**Jakarta, June 25th, 2019** - In 2015, scientists reported Indonesia as second highest contributors of global plastic polluter into the ocean.<sup>1</sup> Considering China's strict policy and other ASEAN country's strong position in global plastic waste trade crisis, environmental activists are warning Presiden Joko Widodo on Indonesia's absence for response and **not** to let Indonesia replace China's rank as the first ocean plastic polluters at the end of the year.

World Bank Report reveals marine debris in Indonesia's waterways consists of 21% of disposable diaper, 16% of single-use plastic, 5% of sachet, 4% of glass and metal, 1% of plastic bottles, 9% of other plastic and 44% of organic waste<sup>2</sup>. Report of the brand audit conducted by Greenpeace Indonesia in mid-September 2018 in three locations in Indonesia, found the packaging of products from Santos, P & G and Wings as the most from beach cleaning activities in Tangerang; Danone, Dettol, Unilever in Bali; and Indofood, Unilever, and Wings products in Yogyakarta.<sup>3</sup>

During the period of 1988-2016, China absorbed around 45.1% of the world's plastic waste.<sup>4</sup> But since March 2018, the Chinese Government has implemented a strict policy on plastic waste

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<sup>1</sup> Jambeck, J.R. et.al (2015) *Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean*. Science Vol. 347, Issue 6223, pp. 768-771. DOI: 10.1126/science.1260352

<sup>2</sup> Cadman, C. A (2018) *Rapid Assessment: Indonesia Marine Debris Hotspots - Synthesis Report*. The World Bank; Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman; Kedutaan Besar Denmark untuk Indonesia; Kedutaan Besar Norwegia untuk Indonesia (<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/983771527663689822/pdf/126686-29-5-2018-14-18-6-SynthesisReportFullReportAPRILFINAL.pdf>)

<sup>3</sup> Greenpeace Indonesia (2018). Greenpeace Menemukan Lebih Dari 700 Merek Sampah Plastik Dari Tiga Lokasi.

(<https://www.greenpeace.org/indonesia/siaran-pers/1052/greenpeace-menemukan-lebih-dari-700-merek-sampah-plastik-dari-tiga-lokasi/> diakses 23 Juni 2019 06:30 GMT+7)

<sup>4</sup> Brooks, A.L.; Wang, S.; Jambeck, J. (2018) The Chinese import ban and its impact on global plastic waste trade. Sci. Adv. 2018. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aat0131

import known as the "National Sword" Policy. Hence, this policy makes global waste trade, especially plastic waste, shocked.

Even though ASEAN countries are known as recyclers of plastic waste<sup>5</sup> (approximately 3% of scrap global plastics waste) and exported 5% of plastic waste to global markets,<sup>6</sup> the load-cycle of recycling and waste management become a burden for these countries because of strict import regulations by China.

*"There are two kinds of plastic waste and shredded produced by paper mills that we found in Gresik; the first is plastic mixed with paper that cannot be recycled, used for tofu production fuels or other fuels. The second type is plastic waste with various forms, in the form of bottles, sachets, food packaging, body care products, and household products,"* said Prigi Arisandi, Executive Director of Ecoton. *"The companies we monitor are almost all abusing import permits and polluting the environment by moving problems to ordinary people,"* Prigi added

Several ASEAN countries have responded to the changes in global plastic waste trade with restrictions on imports. In July 2018, the Malaysian government revoked import licenses of 114 companies and has targeted import bans in 2021.<sup>7</sup> Thailand also targets import bans due to a drastic increase in imports of their plastic waste from the United States by 2000% (91,500 tons) in 2018.<sup>8</sup> Vietnam is no longer issued new licenses for the import of waste, shredded, and / or plastic scrap, paper and metal.<sup>9</sup>

"In principle, import of waste are prohibited in the Law<sup>1011</sup>. However, there are complex definitions in assessing whether a commodity is waste or not; and if it is a waste, then excluded from the import ban or not. This is what happened like in Gresik," said Margaretha Quina, Head of the Pollution Control Division of ICEL. "The complexity of this definition must be addressed, because the consequences are different: illegal or legal, obedient or disobedient." For the findings by Ecoton in Gresik, according to Quina, can be categorized as administration disobedience to crime case. "As weak as it is, it can be subject to the obligation of re-importation if contaminated with hazardous waste, and the import approval can be revoked if the issuance is based on incorrect data submission<sup>12</sup>. As hard as it is, importers are convicted of the offense of entering waste into Indonesia Waste Law, against the law can be fulfilled because of the fact that goods imported are in the form of waste, contrary to their permission. "

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<sup>5</sup> Definisi sampah, berdasarkan Undang-Undang No. 18/2008, adalah sisa kegiatan sehari-hari manusia dan/atau proses alam yang berbentuk padat.

<sup>6</sup> Velis, Costas (2014) Global Recycling Markets: Plastic Waste (A Story for One Player – China). University of Leeds and International Solid Waste Association.

<sup>7</sup> Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) (2018) Levy for plastic waste imports (<http://www.mida.gov.my/home/7161/news/levy-for-plastic-waste-imports/> accessed 20 June 2019 19:55 GMT+7)

<sup>8</sup> Zein, Z (2018) Thailand to ban plastic waste imports by 2021. Eco-Business (<https://www.eco-business.com/news/thailand-to-ban-plastic-waste-imports-by-2021/> accessed 20 June 2019 20:10 GMT+7)

<sup>9</sup> Hogue, T., et al (2018) Vietnam to limit waste imports as shipments build up at ports, The Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vietnam-waste/vietnam-to-limit-waste-imports-as-shipments-build-up-at-ports-idUSKBN1KGOKL> accessed 21 June 2019 08:11 GMT+7)

<sup>10</sup> UU 32/2009 dengan tegas melarang setiap orang untuk "memasukkan limbah yang berasal dari luar wilayah NKRI ke media lingkungan hidup NKRI" (lihat Pasal 69 ayat (1) huruf c)

<sup>11</sup> UU 18/2008 dengan tegas melarang perbuatan "memasukkan sampah ke dalam wilayah Indonesia," dan/atau "mengimpor sampah." (lihat Pasal 29 ayat (1) huruf b)

<sup>12</sup> Look at Ministry of Trade Regulation No. 31/2016 Pasal 21 (g)

Indonesia imported about 124,000 tons of plastic waste (recognized as plastic scrap) in 2013. This number has more than doubled, around 283,000 tons, in 2018. This transaction volume is the highest point of Indonesian imports over the past 10 years based on BPS data and UN Comtrade.

BPS data shows an increase in imports of 141% but the export rate decreased by 48% (around 98,500 tons). This figure indicates that there are around 184,700 tons of plastic waste still in Indonesia, whose fate is unknown - whether all recycled into pellets or become new products - beyond the burden of the generation of domestic plastic waste around 9 million tons.

*"Next year China extends its list of post-consumer products, Thailand also targets to close the doors to import plastic and electronic waste. Meanwhile, Malaysia tightened import controls and the Philippine President politically loudly declared war on imported waste. The sad thing is that Indonesia has no firm attitude and seems to defend the industry without regulation and clear law enforcement,"* said Yuyun Ismawati, Senior Advisor of Bali Focus / Nexus3. *"Some additives used in all types of plastic<sup>13,14</sup> are recognized as chemicals that are carcinogenic and are prohibited in developed countries. Recycling plastic containing Hazardous and toxic materials into other products means poisoning circular economy."*<sup>15</sup>

*"Importing companies must be responsible for dealing with the inherited pollution from these waste collection, transfer and donation activities. The disadvantage of the uncontrolled import of waste that is more profitable for the corporation is the pollution of the environment and the quality of public health,"* said Nur Hidayati from WALHI. *"Many national and regional programs related to plastic and ocean waste have been or are being made, coordinated and followed by Indonesia, but their implementation is not clear in the national development program. The President must make sure all his staff are working earnestly."*

In some areas, Chinese entrepreneurs have become investors or partnered with local people to set up household scale plastic recycling businesses whose permits are questionable.

In various places in Jabodetabek and East Java, AZWI activists also found lands contaminated with various sized remnants of plastic either burned or not, polluting land, agricultural land, and water bodies. Cleaning toxins from plastic pollution is not easy, not cheap and requires serious government intentions.

Micro plastic and plastic fibers are also found in fish in Indonesia, in bottled water and in salt.<sup>16 17</sup> The state's obligation is to guarantee the right of citizens to live in a safe and healthy environment.

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<sup>13</sup> Groh, K.J. et. al (2018) *Overview of known plastic packaging-associated chemicals and their hazards* Sci. of the Env. Vol. 651 Part 2 Pg. 3253-3268. DOI: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.10.015

<sup>14</sup> Nahladakis, J.N. et.al (2017) *An overview of chemical additives present in plastics: Migration, release, fate and environmental impact during their use, disposal and recycling.* Journal of Hazardous Materials Vol. 344 Pg. 179-199. DOI: 10.1016/j.jhazmat.2017.10.014

<sup>15</sup> DiGangi, J. et al (2017) *POPs Recycling Contaminates Children's Toys with Toxic Flame Retardants.* IPEN ([https://ipen.org/sites/default/files/documents/toxic\\_toy\\_report\\_2017\\_update\\_v1\\_5-en.pdf](https://ipen.org/sites/default/files/documents/toxic_toy_report_2017_update_v1_5-en.pdf))

<sup>16</sup> Putri, L.N. (2018) *Mengkhawatirkan, Mikroplastik Ditemukan dalam Garam dan Ikan di Indonesia* (<https://nationalgeographic.grid.id/read/131249836/mengkhawatirkan-mikroplastik-ditemukan-dalam-garam-dan-ikan-di-indonesia?page=all> accessed 24 June 2019 23:11 GMT+7)

<sup>17</sup> Tyree, C. et al (2018) *Mikroplastik dalam Botol Air Mineralmu* (<https://investigasi.tempo.co/240/mikroplastik-dalam-botol-air-mineralmu> accessed 24 June 2019 23:21 GMT+7)

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AZWI Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Indonesia:

1. Reviewing policies and regulations regarding the importation of waste and shredded, especially plastic and paper;
2. Limiting contaminants or contamination to imported plastic / paper waste and scrap by 0.5%;
3. Limiting certain types of plastic that may be imported and only in the form of pellets, or only requires minimal treatment / processing and / or is ready to be used for production;
4. Prohibit the use of hazardous and toxic materials as plastic additives and when recycling plastic
5. Importer producers are prohibited from transferring imported goods to anyone;
6. Importer producers must be responsible for cleaning plastic pollution caused by hand-transfers, being traded and “donated” to other parties and the community;
7. Reviewing the permits of importing plastics and shredded, whether permits are granted and their practices do not pollute the environment;
8. Setting limits, at the end of 2020 as the last limit for the import of dirty plastic waste to Indonesia, follows the agreement of the Basel COP-14 amendment beginning in May 2019;
9. Limit the import volume of shredded to only a maximum of 50% of the installed / available factory capacity;
10. Imports of non-hazardous and toxic materials waste must be included in the Limited Prohibition list and not enter the Green Line;
11. Information about sources of waste generation, the potential for recyclable waste must be made in an integrated manner so that it can meet domestic industrial needs;
12. Import quota for plastic waste must be limited, production and consumption of domestic plastic packaging must also be drastically reduced;
13. EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility)
14. To reduce the risk of report manipulation, surveyor companies that verify the import and export of Hazardous and Toxic and non-Hazardous and Toxic waste must be added and not monopolized by PT Surveyor Indonesia and Sucofindo.

— End —

**[AZWI \(Aliansi Zero Waste Indonesia\)](#)** *AZWI (Alliance Zero Waste Indonesia) is a joint organization that works to encourage the implementation of the zero waste concept correctly with programs and initiatives that support the concept of waste management hierarchy, material life cycle, and sustainable production and consumption. AZWI was initiated by BaliFokus / Nexus3 Foundation, YPBB Association, Indonesian Society of Plastic Bag Diet Association, WALHI National, Greenpeace Indonesia, Indonesia Center For Environmental Law (ICEL), Ecoton Foundation, Zero Waste Community, and Bali Center for Environmental Education (PPLH) Bali.*

**Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (WALHI)** is an environmental organization in Indonesia located in 28 provinces and has 473 members of the organization throughout the territory of Indonesia. Walhi works at the grassroots to advocate environmental cases ([www.walhi.or.id](http://www.walhi.or.id))

**Ecoton** is a non-profit organization that aims to promote environmental justice for present and future generations, especially in sustainable wetland management.

**ICEL** is an independent non-governmental organization for environmental law, involved in advocacy and community empowerment

**BaliFokus/Nexus3** an Indonesian non-governmental organization working to improve the community's capacity, quality of life and advocating a toxics-free environment together with all stakeholders in sustainable way. [www.balifokus.asia](http://www.balifokus.asia)