

Import of PET

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The Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 were amended on 1st March, 2019 to prohibit the import of solid plastic waste into the country including Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Export Oriented Units (EOUs). The import was banned to boost domestic collection and recycling of plastic waste including Polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

However, the situation was reviewed later and the rules were amended in November, 2021 to allow import of PET. The PET import was allowed to fill the gap in waste availability of PET recycling units which in turn provide raw material to Yarn manufacturing units. There was shortage of plastic waste raw material for recycling units in spite of more than 90% collection of PET waste. The rationale is that the PET recycling industry is anchor for domestic waste management and as long as available domestic waste is being collected and recycled, the growth of the industry should not be hindered by lack of raw material.

The policy provides that import would be allowed only to actual recyclers having valid authorization and Consent to Operate so as to ensure that waste is channelized purposefully. Also the permitted import quantity would be restricted only to fill the gap in recycling capacity and not to replace the domestic waste processing.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic waste, including PET, by Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022. As per the guidelines, the producer, importers and brand-owners have EPR obligation for plastic waste. They shall ensure minimum level of recycling (excluding end of life disposal) of plastic waste collected under EPR. The enforceable prescription of minimum level of recycling of plastic packaging waste collected under EPR will further strengthen circular economy of plastic packaging waste.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

HS/PD/IG

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