Campaign, New York Times Focus on SLAB Exports

Businesswire

ALEXANDRIA, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb 11, 2013--The *New York Time's* story, " Report Faults U.S. Use of Mexican Battery Recyclers [1]," published in the February 9th edition by Elisabeth Rosenthal has once again focused the public's attention on the dangers of Spent Lead Acid Battery (SLAB) exports to Mexico by American manufacturers. The *New York Times* also focused attention on this issue in a December 2011 front-page story entitled, " Lead From Old U.S. Batteries Sent to Mexico Raises Risks [2]."

The *Times* article describes the "blistering report", written by the NAFTA-chartered Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), and highlights a "number of shortcomings" with battery exportation and foreign recycling. The report has been forwarded to the governments of Mexico, Canada and the United States for review. Ms. Rosenthal's story also examines the effort by the federal government to engage ASTM International to develop voluntary standards of foreign recycling as well as the battery industry's continued efforts to block them.

"The CEC's scathing report indicts the battery export industry and singles out American and Mexican regulators as unwitting accomplices for failing to control the movement of hazardous battery waste," said Diane Cullo, SLAB Watchdog's Director. "The battery industry's attempts at sweeping the issue under the rug have failed and it is time for regulators to act on this issue once and for all."

In her article, Elisabeth Rosenthal details how the CEC report calls out regulators for failing to account accurately for the number of SLABs exported and whether those SLABs actually reached qualified recyclers upon entry into Mexico. Rosenthal also correctly mentions that one American recycler puts out 30 times more lead emissions than the company's newest facility in the United States. While powerful on its own, the *New York Times* story omits the most salient point from CEC report's Executive Summary that lays bare any attempts from the battery industry to assert that Mexican recyclers follow practices equal to those found in American facilities. The CEC report specifically says, "few [Mexican] smelters appear to have the types of controls, processes and technologies necessary to receive a permit in the United States or Canada today."

"The lack of oversight on the transboundary movement of SLABs coupled with the fact that Mexican recyclers use emission controls that fall well short of American standards should be seen as a clarion call for action by federal regulators. They must get serious about protecting the environment and American jobs from the improper outsourcing of SLABs to Mexico," Cullo added.

With President Obama expected to announce his nominee to succeed EPA

Administrator Lisa Jackson in the coming weeks, SLAB Watchdog is calling for additional focus on battery recycling.

“The nomination process for an EPA Administrator is an excellent opportunity to raise the issue of battery exportation and substandard recycling,” note Cullo. “The Administration has started to address similar issues in its efforts to control substandard electronic waste recycling. There is absolutely no reason why SLAB exports shouldn’t be included in this effort,” Cullo added.

“SLAB Watchdog looks forward to making the case to the new EPA Administrator for why the agency should act to end the practice of exporting hazardous battery waste to one of our most important trade partners.”

Slab Watchdog is waging a campaign to educate American consumers and policy makers on the dangers of SLAB exports.

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