



Shanghai Flash

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Shanghai's New Movements for A Better Environment

With the **World Expo** approaching, intensive actions have been launched in Shanghai's environment construction and improvement in correspondence with its target as a **green Expo**. On the other side of the world, the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009 did not conclude effective measures against climate issues. The **worsening global climate situation** caused by an excessive emission of greenhouse gas has captured the attention of the whole world. It is high time that all countries seek closer cooperation and make an active contribution.

Shanghai's new movements on environment

China's target with regards to **reducing the intensity of carbon dioxide emissions** per unit of GDP in **2020** is by **40 to 45 percent** compared with the level of 2005. Shanghai has been and will continue to make endeavours in energy conservation, emission reduction and recycling. However, the exact amount of Shanghai's contribution to carbon dioxide reduction is not listed in the open documents. The government starts to enforce new measures at the very moment.

1. Development of low carbon economy

The Expo has integrated the ideas and technologies of energy conservation and low carbon from the planning phase and throughout the process of construction. It is definitely to be the best example to showcase Shanghai's determination and ability to promote the low carbon economy.

To explore the future development of environmental-friendly technologies, Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau(SH EPB) carried out several eco-efficient and low carbon economy pilot projects. **The Ten-Year Guidelines to construct the Chongming Ecological Island¹** from 2010 to 2020 was recently released. According to the plan, the Chongming Island will be developed in a well-organized way after its connection to the mainland through the Yangtze River Tunnel Bridge. **The Hongqiao CBD²** is another pioneer example of low carbon business zones in Shanghai, combining the leading technologies in energy conservation and emission reduction.

2. Stricter supervision on heavy polluting enterprises

SH EPB **exposed 1149 illegal companies** who broke environment regulations throughout the year of 2009 on their official website. In addition, the heavy polluting enterprises are under **real-**

¹ The Chongming Island, which is China's third largest island, is located in East China and boasts an area of 1267 km². The Yangtze River Tunnel Bridge has provided a more convenient way to facilitate Chongming's connection with the mainland Shanghai since its operation in November 2009.

² The Hongqiao CBD, covering an area of 86.6 square kilometres, is situated in southwest Shanghai and is also a hub connecting major cities in the Yangtze Delta Region.

time monitoring through facilities installed at the emission exit. Iron, steel, chemical and construction enterprises within 300 km of Shanghai in the Yangtze River Delta will be subject to emergency measures including production control or even shutting down the heavy polluters if the air quality shows negative trends during the World Expo. However, frequent spot checks are needed in case that factories lower their emission standard or remove the monitoring devices at ordinary times or before a pre-informed check.

3. Upgrading emission standard for vehicles

Shanghai raised the emission standard for private automotive vehicles from National I (equalling to Europe I Standard) to **National IV** from 1999 to 2009³. Beginning November 2009, Shanghai replaces Nr. 90 petrol with Nr. 93, which matches the enforcement of National IV Standard ever since. **Financial subsidies** are provided to encourage buyers to upgrade to a new car from June 2009 to the end of April 2010. Shanghai will also **enlarge restriction zones for trucks** who fail to reach the National III Standard or who discharge huge emission gas entering the city centre.

4. Public transport a priority

Shanghai Traffic Authority has been constantly working on extending and improving the public transport nets by facilitating people to travel by **rail transport or by bus**. The total length of rail lines in operation has been extended to 355 kilometres. Those who use the Shanghai Transportation Card will get a certain discount when they interchange between rail transport and buses. The **BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)**, which has been applied in other neighbouring cities and as a new trial in Shanghai, will also be introduced in 2010.

Interaction between the public and the environment authorities

According to 2009 Environmental Bulletin released by the SH EPB, the authorities have received over **37,000 complaints** in the forms of letters, phone calls, emails and visits, among which over 95% were answered or dealt with. The primary complaints focused on **noise and air pollution**. There are 3 open ways for the public to turn to the authorities for help.

1. Approach the Environmental Protection Bureau at all levels

The complaints are acceptable in the forms of letters, phone calls, emails and visits. The Ministry of Environment Protection opened the **12369** hotline on a national scale. Another hotline **+86 21 6355 5605** is also available for local residents provided by SH EPB. The complaints will be recorded but the processing period will take a comparatively long time.

2. Public Media

Local Newspaper or TV program normally have a special column to publish or broadcast requirements raised by the citizen and the correspondent solution by the authorities. The most representative and urgent cases are selected and the feedback is often quick and to the point.

3. Office of Shanghai Promotion Activities for 600-Day Plan of Action for the Expo

The official website of the office provides a platform for interaction between the public and the authorities. The citizens not only report the troubles and difficulties around themselves, but also come up with suggestions and proposals to help each other. It is as such an effective way to receive a fast feedback under the public supervision. However, it is uncertain whether the platform will still work after the Expo.

Link to two true cases in Shanghai

Case I: Smelly gas leading to abortion cases in Pudong New District

Two landfill plants located in Caolu Town of Pudong New Area, whose capacities are able to process 1/3 of the household garbage of the Pudong New District have been creating problems.

³ Shanghai started to implement National I Standard (Europe I) among new vehicles in 1999 and updated the standard to National II the year after. By 2005, 42,000 taxis and 5,400 buses have met the National II Standard. The year of 2008 marked the widely operation of the National III Standard. Shanghai eliminated 150,000 vehicles with heavy pollution and nearly 500,000 fuel-powered motorbikes by the end of 2008.

The neighbouring residents commonly believe that the strong smelly gas poses great damage to their health, especially the emergence of dozens of unexpected abortion accidents in the surrounding area. The situation has lasted nearly 2 years. Besides constant appealing to the local authorities, residents have gathered on the online community to seek an effective solution. They even launched a secret private investigation to prove the bad effect of their living surroundings.

The Pudong New District Environmental Protection Bureau took various measures but the results were not satisfactory. Currently, the on-going construction of a comprehensive ecological park is expected to provide a fundamental solution. A large-scale green separation belt, covering the park, will not only reduce smelly gases and dust but also contribute to the environmental rehabilitation.

Case II: Stubborn pollution trouble caused by multiple sources in Songjiang District

Residents in Songjiang District have been complaining against the potential risks of nearby pollution since 2003, which resulted from one solid waste treatment plant, one pig farm and two Taiwanese companies producing plastic goods. The mixture of physical sources and chemical emission poses a great threat to over 100,000 residents of the area together with 80,000 university students in the Songjiang University Town. The nearby residents often have respiratory diseases and headaches.

Not only the Songjiang Environmental Protection Bureau but also the Songjiang District People's Government have mediated in this issue but with limited improvement. The Songjiang District People's Government announced to close two manufacturing factories in 2008. But considering the employment rate and remarkable economic contribution that the two companies make to the local GDP particularly in the financial crisis, the order has been delayed to execute. At present, the residents have reacted together and brought the case to court.

The similar cases are not rare to hear. The awareness of Shanghai citizens has been substantially strengthened. They are taking actions to defend their due rights for a clean and healthy living environment.

The suburban districts are facing growing pressure of handling environment complaints. This partly due to the massive attraction of foreign investment **with relative easy entry thresholds** in the area in the past decade. The local governments had not expected the immigration of such a large amount of population and the expansion of residential community. On the other hand, the companies put aside their original promises and **lowered their environment standard under relaxed regulatory supervision**.

For the existing enterprises, they will either choose to relocate their plants or to compensate the residents on the basis of fulfilling their environment commitment. At present, the trend of suburbanization becomes a new concern for the heavy polluting enterprises when they select production sites. **The concentrated gathering of industrial parks** may be another option for future industrial layout, definitely on the premise of higher environment standard and tighter management.

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