

Date: 2008-12-11
File: HCB Waste from Australia



Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Minister for the Environment
PO BOX 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT
AUSTRALIA 2600

Australian export of toxic HCB waste to Denmark

Dear Minister,

We write as a matter of urgency to express our deep concern regarding the proposal for Australia to export 6,000 of the 22,000 tonnes of hazardous hexachlorobenzene (HCB) waste for incineration at "Kommunekemi" in Nyborg in Denmark.

We have noted that the German community and government have already rejected a previous application to import the toxic waste for incineration.

As a developed country and a signatory to the *Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes & their Disposal (1989)*, Australia has a moral and a legal obligation to develop the capacity to manage its own toxic waste as it has done in the past.

We cannot understand why you would approve a permit to send the toxic waste on such a dangerous and potentially disastrous journey across the oceans to be disposed of in Denmark, or any other country. To incinerate such highly chlorinated waste may cause other pollution as a result of toxic emissions to air and the need to manage the toxic fly ash and incineration waste from the incinerator.

We urge you to undertake an independent assessment of Australia's technical capacity to dispose of the HCB wastes, as we believe you do have the technical capacity to manage it.

We sincerely ask that you ensure this toxic waste is safely disposed of in Australia and that you do not export your toxic waste to another country or community as is your responsibility.

We acknowledge "Kommunekemi"s expertise and knowhow concerning handling toxic waste. We are aware that "Kommunekemi" is exporting this knowhow.

Instead of you exporting the toxic HCB waste to Denmark, we would like to encourage you – if necessary - to make an agreement with "Kommunekemi" and ask for "Kommunekemi"s assistance in establishing your own facility to handle the waste.

Yours sincerely

Ella Maria Bisschop-Larsen
President, Danish Society for Conservation of Nature

The Danish Society for Nature Conservation

The Danish Society for Nature Conservation is the largest nature conservation and environmental organisation in Denmark. With the support of 140,000 members, we work to protect nature and the environment. Our 95 branches and our 2,000 active members are our eyes and ears at local and regional levels.

In 1911, we started as an organisation mainly aiming at nature conservation and access to nature. Today, we work with a broad range of issues concerning nature, the environment, resources and consumption.

Our vision is a sustainable society with a rich and diverse nature and a clean and healthy environment.

Our daily work is performed by a secretariat of about 50 enthusiastic professionals.

<http://www.dn.dk/Default.aspx?ID=4593>