



Observation Report on the Social Responsibility of 582 Waste Incineration Plants in China

In recent years, to confront the challenges of increasing solid waste and municipal waste, waste incineration has gradually become one of the most widely used end-of-life treatment methods under the guidance of policies and market incentives.

With the implementation of the “dual carbon” strategy and the continuous fighting against pollution, waste incineration plants and their operating enterprises are not only the operators of public infrastructure but also key polluting entities and important targets of pollution and carbon reduction. They must consistently operate up to standard, as well as continuously improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Disclosing environmental information in accordance with laws and regulations and opening up the plants to the public are very important to waste incineration companies in fulfilling their social responsibilities. It's also of great significance in promoting their subsidiaries and upstream and downstream suppliers to continuously improve their environmental performance and helping the environmental protection industry to achieve synergy in reducing pollution and carbon emissions.

Based on the *Observation Report on the Environmental Responsibility of 428 Waste Incineration Plants* in 2019, Wuhu Ecological and Environmental Protection Volunteer Group (hereinafter referred to as “Wuhu Ecology Center”) and the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE) proposed a “three-step” action plan for the waste incineration plants and their operating enterprises to fulfill its social responsibility. The three steps include: trusting the public and committing full transparency, building a three-dimensional monitoring system for the company's subsidiaries, and actively promoting suppliers to improve environmental behavior.

Since 2019, Wuhu Ecology Center and IPE have observed that since the launch of the “Automatic Monitoring Data Disclosure Platform for Domestic Waste Incineration Power Plants (available in Chinese only)”, there has been a significant increase in information disclosure and automatic monitoring data compliance rates in the waste incineration industry. With the release of the “Rules for Automatic Monitoring Data Marking of Emission Units in the Thermal Power, Cement and Paper Industries (Trial)” (available in Chinese only), the waste incineration industry has become a pilot industry for the innovative pollution regulation of stationary sources. With “opening environmental protection facilities to the public” and other incentivizing policies, waste incineration plants and their operating enterprises have demonstrated their

proactiveness towards environmental management. Lastly, by publicly "committing to be the environmental law-abiding enterprise", waste incineration plants and their operating enterprises answered the call from the public, environmental organizations and the government to undertake their social responsibility.

In order to comprehensively review the current practices of waste incineration plants fulfilling their social responsibilities, Wuhu Ecology Center and IPE conducted an observational study on the environmental information disclosure of 582 waste incineration plants through their official websites and other sources during the period from 2019 to November 2021 composed this *Observation Report on the Environmental Responsibility of 582 Waste Incineration Plants in China*.

The observations and analysis in the Report show that the environmental information disclosure of some enterprises which operated waste incineration plants was obviously insufficient: out of 579 waste incineration plants operated under 104 enterprises, only 36 enterprises (35%) have disclosed the environmental information of 215 waste incineration plants (37%), which was not beneficial to breaking the information barriers between waste incineration plants, the public, and the regulatory authorities. Nevertheless, the waste incineration plants have explored the practices of fulfilling social responsibility, including active disclosure of carbon emission-related information, continuous improvement of energy efficiency, piloting ultra-low emission processes, conducting environmental impact post-evaluation, investing in kitchen waste treatment facilities in the face of better waste sorting in communities, paying attention to suppliers' environmental performance, and opening the waste incineration plants to the public.

In order to guide and motivate waste incineration plants and their operating enterprises to further fulfill their primary responsibility of ecological environmental protection and environmental information disclosure, and to help reduce pollution and carbon emission, Wuhu Ecology Center and IPE suggest enterprises which operated waste incineration plants the following:

1. Take the initiative to build and continuously improve the "Environmental Information Disclosure Column" on their websites to fully disclose environmental information;
2. Genuinely open the waste incineration plants to the public and guide the public to participate in waste sorting;
3. Disclose environmental information of waste incineration plants per law esp. the emission information and environmental quality information;
4. Proactively disclose more information related to "climate action," including information on carbon emissions and the application of energy-saving and carbon-reducing technologies;

5. Continuously improve power generation efficiency and reduce power consumption through technological improvements and the management of incoming waste;

6. Proactively participate in environmental management, including exploring ultra-low emission processes and conducting environmental impact post-evaluation;

7. Consider the investment in kitchen waste treatment facilities to diversify the management of waste and increase the level of reuse, reduce and environmentally-sound treatment of waste;

8. Pay attention to the environmental performance of suppliers; interact with more stakeholders.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) and revised by Chase Wang.

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