

GARBAGE MANAGEMENT

MINISTRY TO CUT HOUSEHOLD WASTE

Stricter rules to be enforced and public to be encouraged to turn trash into cash, says Zuraida

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THE Housing and Local Government Ministry will implement initiatives to reduce household waste, following failed attempts by the previous administration to successfully handle the issue.

Its minister, Zuraida Kamaruddin, said her ministry was mulling stricter guidelines on illegal plastics industries and would ini-

tiate new national policies on plastic waste management, as well as educate and get the public to turn trash to cash by next year.

"We (the ministry) need to look at stricter enforcement because there are policy abuses. Recently, 17 illegal plastic factories in Sungai Petani were shut down. Instead of merely fining them RM300, we will come up with an investigation paper (IP) to probe deeper into the problem.

"While there are rules and regulations in place, we lack enforcement. We need to focus on source separation. Countries, such as Japan and Finland, have been practising this for more than 40 years.

"We have a long way to go, but we have great examples to follow," she said at the launch of a white paper on "An Advanced Plastics Recycling Industry for Malaysia" at Monash University Malaysia here yesterday.



Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin (second from right, receiving a book from Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association vice-president C.C. Cheah at the launch of a white paper on 'An Advanced Plastics Recycling Industry for Malaysia' at Monash University Malaysia in Subang Jaya yesterday. With them are Monash University Malaysia president and Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Andrew Walker (left) and National Solid Waste Management Department director-general Suliman Abdul Rahman. PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

As there was US\$600 billion (RM2.5 trillion) in plastic waste revenue, Zuraida said, adding to it would be lucrative for Malaysia to capitalise on this.

"In a pilot programme to turn trash into cash, we are working with non-governmental organisations and counsellors to teach Ampang residents to look at trash as a potential source of cash. This is especially important in People's Housing Projects and Bottom 40 (income group) residential areas, where the money can be used for the benefit of their children.

"If managed well and with good regulations, proper plastic management can become a modern and advanced industry which is not hazardous to the environment.

"The world still needs plastic. So until we find an alternative to plastic, we have to protect our environment and marine life. This is the way forward for Malaysia."

Zuraida said her ministry would document a standard operating procedure to reduce household trash for residential areas by December this year.