

PRESS RELEASE

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Is the tide turning for toxic TV exports?

The exposé this week by Greenpeace, Sky News and The Independent that non-working electronic equipment is being illegally exported to Nigeria for recycling will come as no shock for anyone involved in the electronics recycling industry. Industry groups and recyclers have been pointing out for years that proper implementation of the WEEE regulations are being undermined by illegal exports and the shady area of “reuse” of equipment that has been discarded in the UK because it no longer works. This exposé follows on from a similar operation carried out last year by the US Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) where exports of toxic CRTs were tracked to China where they would have been dumped rather than being recycled.

Is the toxic tide about to turn? The environment Agency's new environmental crime unit has arrested a man in relation to the illegal shipment of waste to Nigeria and are currently investigating a number of criminal networks involved in the illegal export of electronic waste. It is a small but significant step towards ending the flood of toxic equipment such as TVs and CRT monitors that is being exported to developing nations where it is burned out on the street in order to recover the copper with the remaining parts being dumped where it causes significant pollution.

In the past 6 months the Environment Agency has intercepted 33 cargo containers of electronic waste that was destined for export; this is a drop in the ocean compared to estimates of 10,000 tonnes of TVs and 23,000 tonnes of IT equipment being illegally exported each year. To add more confirmation that this toxic trade exists, a recycler from India commented only this week to Nulife Glass founder, Simon Greer, it is estimated that at least 50 containers per day are illegally imported into India where their Law clear forbids the import of electronic waste.

Nulife Glass do not export any televisions or computer screens, working or not and all equipment we receive is recycled in the UK. Unlike other recyclers we are not tied to the export market for CRT glass as our unique process means the toxic CRT glass is safely treated in the UK through the only recycling process in the world to produce high purity lead ingots and clean glass sand for use in the construction sector.

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