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New international law to protect vulnerable countries from waste dumping.

The [Basel Ban Amendment](#), adopted by the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal in 1995, has finally [today become international law](#). This amendment to the Basel Convention, now ratified by 98 countries, and most recently, by Costa Rica, prohibits the export of hazardous wastes from member states of the European Union, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Liechtenstein to all other countries. This agreement today becomes a new Article (4a) of the Basel Convention.

Jane Bremmer, National Toxics Network, “This is a great day for environmental justice. No longer will wealthy OECD countries be able to export their hazardous wastes to developing nations. Now Australia must urgently ratify this amendment and show their commitment to the Basel Convention as a participating country and strengthen the decisions already made by the Prime Minister and COAG to develop Australia’s waste recycling capacity and put an end to exporting contaminated mixed plastics and other wastes to vulnerable countries.

We have already seen the devastating effects on Indonesian communities as a result of Australia’s waste exports where non- recyclable plastic waste is being openly burnt in poor villages. [Dioxin laden eggs and the contamination of air, water and soil](#), seriously threaten the health of communities in South East Asia.

The Australian government has already announced their decision to ban waste exports in the near future. If the Australian Government is serious about this ban, then ratifying the Basel Ban Amendment will demonstrate their commitment to stop waste dumping on poorer countries. Any plan to allow dangerous loop holes such as the export of mixed waste, repackaged and reclassified as Process Engineered Fuel or Refuse Derived Fuel to vulnerable developing countries from Australia, knowing full well that these countries do not have the necessary regulatory frameworks, environment and human rights protections available, would be a major step backwards for Australia.

It's time to ban these problematic wastes once and for all. If we cannot safely recycle a plastic product, we shouldn't be making it. It's time to put a cap on plastic production, eliminate toxic substances from our materials production systems and invest in a circular economy through zero waste policies and full product stewardship. Our planet is contaminated with plastic and chemicals that will never go away, bioaccumulating and biomagnifying up the food chain. This is an untenable situation that all governments around the world must act upon. Today Australia can do just that by ratifying the new Basel Ban Amendment and enshrining this law and more progressive waste management policy, into our national regulations.”

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