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20 July 2017

China to refuse foreign waste in a bid for cleaner air

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China continues to demonstrate its growing commitment to sustainability. On July 18th, the Asian nation announced to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it would no longer be importing foreign garbage shipments.

China has for a long time been a key importer of foreign waste. According to data provided by international news agency Reuters, last year China accounted for 56 percent of global waste plastics imports, valued at \$3.7 billion.

The import ban is a bid to clean China's polluted air and prohibits imports of plastic, paper, slag, waste wool, ash and cotton.



WTO claims that 92 percent of the global population is now breathing unhealthy polluted air, and China is top of the list.

In December 2016 the country's capital city, Beijing, was on red alert, it's most severe warning.

According to the Reuters report, China's WTO filing said 'large amounts of dirty wastes are mixed in solid waste that can be used as raw materials, which pollutes China's environment'- China's smog-filled air is a very serious health hazard, and the waste imports play a role in polluting this air.

According to WTO, [air pollution is the cause of 6 million premature deaths annually](#), and China alone saw 1.1 million air pollution related deaths in 2015.

China's rapid development has meant that clean air standards have suffered dramatically, as poor management of waste has led to toxic waterways.

This is not the first time that China has put a ban on waste imports, however it is the first time that Chinese president, Xi Jinping, has officially announced it.

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