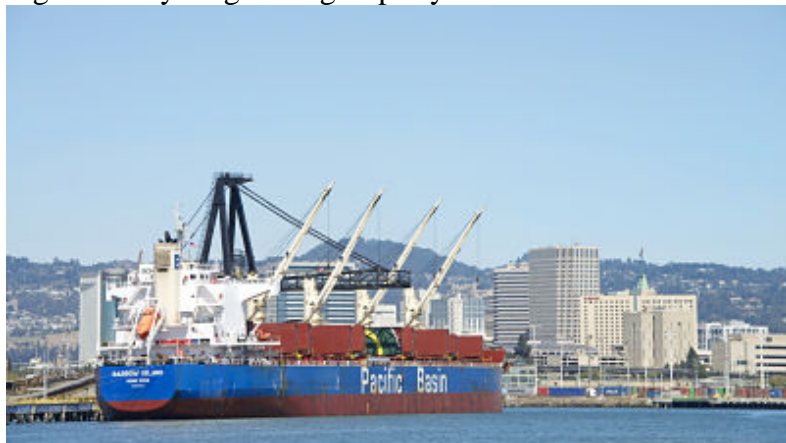


China again cracks down on scrap plastic imports

By Bobby Elliott, Plastics Recycling Update

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A global recycling trade group says China has rekindled its scrutiny of imported plastics.



According to a [report](#) from the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR), China's Ministry of Environmental Protection has informed local authorities throughout the country to focus inspections on the quality and legality of imported scrap plastic shipments. In 2013, a similar action by the Chinese government, known as Operation Green Fence, [cut off significant flows](#) of material from the U.S. and elsewhere.

BIR reports a priority of the latest crackdown, which began on Nov. 1 and will run until Dec. 31, is to aimed at identifying and rejecting import loads containing unacceptable material such as solid waste. The action is also looking to ensure Chinese scrap processors are handling material according to the procedures laid out in their individual licenses,

Local authorities have been tasked with conducting spot audits of scrap handlers and buyers in China to determine their compliance, according to BIR.

Sally Houghton, a buyer and seller of PET for Plastic Recycling Corporation of California (PRCC), said thus far the effects of the reported crackdown have yet to be felt by her business.

While a handful of Chinese buyers have told Houghton "it's business as usual," one buyer said last week inspectors began heightened monitoring of plastics reaching the country through northern ports including Qingdao and Tianjin.

Houghton, who also works for the Moore Recycling Associates consultancy, noted the industry should be better prepared this time around to handle any potential fallout from rejected loads in China.

"I think we're in a much healthier position now," Houghton said. "What we have to do as an industry is go through that transition of not being dictated to by the Chinese market, but really go by our own domestic needs and market. Right now, we're going through a flux, where the domestic is trying to lead the way price-wise, but it's still in the shadow of the export price."