An Account of Moore Recycling visits to Plastic Recycling Facilities in China
PLASTIC RECYCLING IN CHINA

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Moore Recycling staff visited China five times from 2008 to 2010 to learn what happens to the plastic scrap we send to China: specifically PET, film and mixed resin bales.

Pudong, Waichau, Port of Hong Kong, Shandong Province, Hangzhou, Quingdao, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Shenzhen
In 2004, China imported 5.5 billion pounds of plastic.

By 2008, it was up to 9.7 billion pounds.

Myth: Most of China’s scrap plastic is imported.
FINDINGS

- 10’s of thousands of plastic recyclers in China
- Most recyclers small labor-intensive entrepreneurial operations using domestically fabricated equipment
- Myth: Scrap plastic shipped to China is just burned
FINDINGS

- 39% of plastic recycling businesses went out of business in China at the end of 2008
- Quality and output vary greatly
- China has passed many regulations to control supply and processes: enforcement is difficult but progressing
- Myth: Most facilities use child or forced labor & working conditions are terrible
Prohibit the importation of unprocessed scrap [1996]

Technical Specifications for Pollution Control during Collection and Recycle of Waste Plastics [2007]:
- Pollution: Air, Water, Noise, Waste
- Incineration
- Transportation & Storage
- Record keeping
- Processing: Grinding, Washing, Melting/Pelletizing, Worker health & safety, Location
- Packaging & Labeling

AQSIQ regulation No. 119 [2009]
- Registration of foreign suppliers and domestic assignees
- Inspections: before loading, on-site at Chinese ports
- Follow-up of foreign suppliers and domestic consignees: national “Black List” of foreign suppliers & domestic consignees
- Trained 1883 new staff to provide unified law enforcement
Most material from the US goes through the Port of Hong Kong: port employees inspect the material.

Depending on the destination some containers are emptied and loaded onto domestic containers.

Myth: Transportation costs to China are practically free.
Most PET recycling facilities are in Zhejiang and Jiangsu.
Most film recycling facilities are in Shandong and Fujian.
Most Mixed resin recycling facilities are in Guangdong, Fujian and Hebei.