

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No.180 of 2024 (SZ)

In the matter of:

Tribunal on its own motion - SUO MOTU based
on the news item Published in Dinamalar,
Chennai Edition dt 20.05.2024 titled
“A Fire at a Chemical waste dump engulfed villages with toxic fumes”.

Versus

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
Through its Member Secretary,
Chennai and Ors.

...Respondent(s)

REPORT FILED BY 2ND RESPONDENT- THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, TIRUVALLUR

INDEX

S. No.	Date	Description	Page No.
1	22.01.2025	Status Report Filed By 2 nd Respondent - District Collector- Tiruvallur.	1-10

(Note: The page numbers are at the top centre of every page)



Through

Dr. D. Shanmuganathan

Standing Counsel of Government of Tamil Nadu

National Green Tribunal

Southern Zone, Chennai

DATE:23.03.2025

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE AT CHENNAI
Original Application No.180 of 2024 (SZ)

IN THE MATTER OF
Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU
Based on the news item published in
'Dinamalar' Chennai Edition
Dated : 20.05.2024 titled
"A Fire at a Chemical waste dump
engulfed Villages with toxic fumes"

Versus

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
Through its Member Secretary,
Chennai and Ors.

...Respondents

STATUS REPORT FILED BY THE 2nd RESPONDENT

I, Thiru.M.Prathap, I.A.S, S/o. Thiru. Murugavanam,
aged about 30 years, residing at District Collector's Camp
Office at Master Plan Complex in Tiruvallur Town, Taluk
and District and presently holding the post of the District
Collector, Tiruvallur do hereby solemnly affirm and
sincerely state as follows:

1. I am the 2nd Respondent herein and as such I am well acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case from records available with this office.

2. It is submitted that on 28.5.2024, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (SZ), Chennai has taken as a Suo Mottu based on the News item published in Tamil Daily viz., 'Dinamalar', Chennai Edition dated 20.05.2024 under the caption "A fire at a Chemical waste dump engulfed villages with toxic fumes" alleging that on 19.05.2024 at around 2:00 p.m., a heap of chemical waste caught fire at a toxic waste management plant viz., Re-Sustainable IWM Solutions Limited which is functioning at SIPCOT premises in Gummidipoondi. On the same day, the Hon'ble Tribunal has directed the first respondent - (Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board) to file a report, after making a spot inspection and as per the direction the report is submitted herein.

3. It is submitted that on the report received from the District Environmental Engineer, Gummidipoondi, it is revealed that the common Hazardous Waste Treatment and

Disposal Facility of M/s. RE-Sustainability IWM Solutions Limited (Formerly Tamil Nadu Waste Management Limited) located at Plot Nos. 1 to 33 & 124 to 150, SIPCOT Industrial Complex, Gummidipoondi, Pappankuppam Village, Gummidipoondi Taluk and Tiruvallur District is in existence since 2007 carrying out the management of Industrial Hazardous Waste through Secured Landfill and Incineration. It is submitted that the unit has obtained the required approvals from Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and the License from the Fire and Rescue Services Department, and the said approvals are valid till the date of 31/03/2027 and 07/08/2025 respectively.

4.It is submitted that the Facility is engaged in the disposal of the Hazardous Wastes generated from the industries located within the State of Tamil Nadu through Secured Land Fill and through Incineration. The Facility is also engaged in the process of blending the wastes having calorific value, and supplies the same to Cement Kilns, to be used as alternate fuel.

5. It is submitted that the facility, during the time of incident was operating two cells for land fill and establishing another cell. The Facility had stocked the waste materials such as scrapped HDPE Liners, scrapped geo-textiles, cut liners, HDPE liners removed from the Cells used for waste covering, scrapped HDPE Drums and Fiber Reinforced Plastic waste in the Southern side of Cell1, over an area of around 1400 sq.m., weighing about 60 MT in total, which was reported to be shredded and sent to Cement Kilns for Co-Processing to be used as Alternate Fuel Resource, in view of the highly calorific value of these wastes.

6. It is submitted that on 19.05.2024, at around 1.00 p.m., the above stored materials got fired and was noticed by the employee and tried to douse the fire with Dry Chemical Powder. Since the fire was at the center of the stored area, and spreading towards the periphery, the location at which the flames are active was not accessible and hence the fire hydrant was deployed to extinguish the fire. Meanwhile, the fire started spreading and hence the

services of Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department at SIPCOT Industrial Complex was sought at around 2.10 p.m., Three Fire Fighting teams along with their Fire Fighting Engines arrived shortly and started extinguishing fire from three directions.

7. It is submitted that as the materials got fire are of polymers having high molecular weight, a situation of oxygen short supply condition arose, resulted in thick dense black. The smoke was spreading towards North East direction. The Fire Engines were controlling the fire using water from three locations. The fire engines were continuously replenished with the water stored in water storage tank of the facility and also sourced from the SIPCOT Industrial Estate water supply system through metered pipeline. As the fire was very intense, the same could not be doused completely with water alone. Hence, foam was also mixed to extinguish the fire. Even though, this attempt yielded some positive impact, the flames reappears again once there is wind action, thereby the Oxygen availability increases. As the fire was not able to be

contained with the help of water and the Dry Chemical Powder (DCP) and Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), and as personnel could not access the point in which fire flames, it was decided that in order to cut the Oxygen availability, thereby dousing the flames/fires is the only way to ensure that the flames/fire did not re-appear, it was decided to spread sand over burning material so as to cut off oxygen supply, thereby containing the fire. This approach yielded fairly good results, even though the progress was not anticipated.

8. It is submitted that the sand kept available for the construction of the Land Fill Cell was lifted through earth movers and filled near the firing area using tipper Lorries and four earth movers were used to dump/spread the sand over the burning material to suppress the smoke and fire. This attempt started giving some positive results. The spreading/dumping of sand was carried out from the periphery, towards the center, and because of that the fire and smoke came to be reduced and controlled to the tune of over 90% by 8.30 p.m. of that day and the

dumping/spreading soil over the center of fire continued. The fire and smoke were completely extinguished by around 10.30 p.m., and sprinkling of water was continued over the sand/soil, so as to cool the burnt materials and no further fire could emanate. After making sure that the fire and smoke has been extinguished, then only the Tahsildhar, Gummidipoondi and Assistant Engineer of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board left the Facility.

9.It is submitted that because of the incidence and the consequent spreading of smoke, no person injured or subjected to any physical discomfort, or no one has reported to have any health issues. However, the Public from the nearby habitations informed that the black smoke deposited at their residences. The actual cause for the fire could not be confirmed.

10.It is learned that based on the advice of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, to recommence the activities/ operation after carrying out as Assessment of the Fire mitigation and control measures installed in the facility, by engaging Experts in this field and in

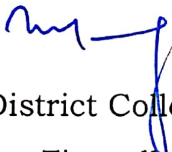
consultation with the Fire and Rescue Services Department, implement the augmentation/recommendation of the Assessment Report, the routine operation of the facility was suspended.

11.It is known that the facility has entrusted the fire safety adequacy assessment to M/s. FET (Fire, Explosion, and Toxics) Solutions Pvt Ltd., a Global Safety Consulting and Training firm that specializes in Organizational Behavior, process and Safety, working in Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, Risk Management, and Safety Culture transformation” and the Report was furnished by the agency on 7.7.2024.

12.It is submitted that the Sub Collector, Ponneri inspected the Facility and during the inspection, it was ascertained that the Facility has carried out the augmentations recommended in the Study Report. It is also noted that the Facility has deployed one mobile water tanker of 5 cu.m., capacity fitted with high pressure pump, to use the same where there is no access for the fire hydrant.

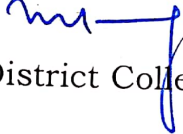
13.It is submitted that the Facility's firefighting infrastructure in place was checked by third party, and the recommendation- including the augmentation of firefighting system is carried out. Further, the Fire and Rescue Department also inspected the Facility. on 06/08/2024, and based on the inspection, Renewal of Fire License was granted on 08/08/2024, with a validity of one year.

It is therefore humbly prayed that this Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone, Chennai may be pleased to accept the status report and thus render justice.


District Collector,
Tiruvallur

VERIFICATION

I, Thiru.M.Prathap, I.A.S, S/o. Thiru. Murugavanam, aged about 30 years, working as District Collector, Tiruvallur, do verify that the submissions in paragraphs 1 to 13 are true and correct to the best of my knowledge as per records and I verify the same at Tiruvallur on this 22nd day of January, 2025.


District Collector,
Tiruvallur