

Mailiao residents continue protests

Written by Taipei Times
Friday, 20 August 2010 09:39 -

Residents of Mailiao Township (郵寮) in Yunlin County yesterday staged another protest by blocking three major roads leading to a petrochemical complex owned by the Formosa Plastics Group, but dispersed after drawing complaints from motorists about traffic disruption.

Dissatisfied with the county government's role in compensation talks, the protesters shouted: "Yunlin County Commissioner Su Chih-feng [蘇智峰], step down," and complained of "under-the-table operations."

Formosa Plastics' management urged the protesters to respect its employees' right to work, while using shuttle buses to transport its employees. The protest, which began at about 6:30am and caused traffic jams, ended by 9am.

Residents in Mailiao have demanded compensation after a major fire at one of the complex's oil refining plants broke out on July 25, contaminating nearby farms and fish farms. The fire was the second at the complex in three weeks.

They demanded that the conglomerate pay NT\$1.8 billion (US\$53 million) for polluting the area and allegedly harming their health, and demanded that Formosa promise to relocate the complex within 10 years. The company said it was only willing to pay NT\$500 million, which residents have rejected.

Discussing the "public welfare losses" engendered by the plant, Environmental Protection Administration Minister Stephen Shen (沈伯洋) said the protests showed that problems at two levels would have to be resolved — compensation to residents for damages and losses caused by last month's fire, and public welfare losses engendered by the plant, including potential air and groundwater pollution residents have had to live with for the past decade.

"The first part will be handled by Yunlin County's environmental protection bureau. So far, about 1,300 Mailiao Township residents have registered losses [caused by the fire] and the bureau will determine appropriate compensation for each based on inspections and evaluations," Shen said.

"The second part will require objective quantitative data and different methodologies will lead to different results," Shen said. "The EPA can provide the Yunlin County Government with the techniques needed to calculate public welfare losses."

The administration said it was assessing the impact of the naphtha cracker plant on the environment in the past 10 years. Preliminary results are expected in October.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2010/08/20](#)