

## Dead fish thrown at Executive Yuan

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Yunlin County Commissioner Su Chih-feng (蘇智峰) and a group of Mailiao Township (馬寮) residents yesterday appealed to Premier Wu Den-yih (吳登輝) and the government to listen to their complaints about pollution from a naphtha cracker in their town.

Braving the scorching sun, the protesters knelt in front of the Executive Yuan during their protest. They also threw dead fish and clams that had been found days after a fire broke out in a residual desulphurizer at Formosa Petrochemical Corp's petrochemical complex on Sunday night.

On July 7, the company had also shut a naphtha cracker after a fire at the complex.

"This was what the water looked like in our fish farm," said one protester as he held a bottle of black water in his hands.

The protesters said they had turned to the Executive Yuan for help because they had not had a response from the government to their request that the environmental impact assessment on the plant's fifth stage expansion be stopped.

However, Wu did not appear. Liao Yaw-chung (廖雲章), chief of the Executive Yuan's fifth section — the unit that deals mainly with economic policy — received the protesters and said he would relay their appeal to the premier.

While Wu did not meet the group led by the Democratic Progressive Party's Su, he did meet for half an hour on Wednesday with a group of Mailiao residents led by Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Chang Chia-chun (張嘉辰).

Before heading to the Executive Yuan, Su's group attended a public hearing held by DPP lawmakers Tien Chiu-chin (田秋堃) and Liu Chien-kuo (劉建國) on the two fires.

Su said the premier should visit Yunlin County to gain a better understanding of the safety issues surrounding the naphtha cracker.

Pollution from the recent fires seriously damaged the agricultural and fisheries industries in the area and exposed Yunlin residents to seven times the level of pollution in other parts of the country, Su said.

She was also unhappy the Executive Yuan only sent low-ranking officials to the hearing.

"I was once a lawmaker. I know public hearings do little to resolve problems. It was such a humble request to have officials come and listen to us. However, what we learned at the public hearing was that the Executive Yuan will continue to review the expansion plan," Su said, referring to remarks made by Vice Minister of Economic Affairs Hwang Jung-chiou (黃仲愷) yesterday morning.

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Hwang told a press conference following the weekly Cabinet meeting that the recent fires would not interfere with the environmental impact assessment process.

“We were of the opinion that the environmental impact assessment should be delinked from the accidents,” Hwang said in response to a question.

“Maybe the members of the Environmental Protection Administration’s Environmental Impact Assessment Commission will demand that Formosa Plastics meet more requirements because of the accidents,” Hwang said.

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