

Tyre industry leaders express major concern over REDISA's recycling plan

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The recently announced REDISA tyre scrap management and recycling plan has left many tyre industry leaders unsettled in its primary motives and political interference is suspected.

Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa, officially approved REDISA's submission in November 2011, of a purported environmentally efficient tyre waste management plan on the mounting stockpile of scrap tyres in this country. The nature of the plan and the brevity of the approval process has come under fire with REDISA only having submitted the plan mid-year 2011, preceding governmental approval in just a few short months.

This has come all too suddenly for some independent tyre industry bodies, SATRP (South African Tyre Recycling Process Company), TDAFA (Tyre Dealer And Fitment Centre Association) and industry members who have been fighting the Cause for close on 10 years, with no results. This undoubtedly begs the question 'why now?' and how did REDISA manage to get the minister to lend a sympathetic ear to quickly when the major industry players could not?

REDISA (Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa) is a non-profit organisation that is positioning itself in close association with Government but remains independent from the SA tyre industry. Head of REDISA, Mr. Herman Erdman (formally chairman of the TDAFA) has reportedly been embroiled in a wave of controversy allegedly linking him to misappropriated funds from within the tyre industry, therefore resulting in industry members questioning the authenticity of REDISA's tyre recycling plan, its methods, its management and its agenda.

Concerned consumer champion and industry member, Alex Taplin says, " This approval has left most, if not all us, in shock. It is a known fact that a huge amount of work has, for many years been invested by the SATRP, TDAFA and others with the view to foster responsible scrap tyre management. This included the formulation of credible workable plans in a free and fair manner and in a regulated environment. The SATRP has invested a purported eight million Rands into this investigation, and had already submitted its plan to the Government ages ago, without any acknowledgement or feedback. It's preposterous that after all this time, REDISA has suddenly been selected as the favoured party, and that without the appropriate opportunity for the public to comment."

While the ACT is intended to encourage and support the creation of a sustainable recycling industry to deal with a major and problematic waste product but also - and importantly - to create jobs and foster small and medium sized businesses in communities throughout the country, it will also come with very onerous consumer sacrifices: The REDISA plan proposes a tyre "levy" of R2.30 per KG which will be charged on all new manufactured and imported tyres.

"The average weight of a passenger or 4x4 or light truck tyre is around 12kg - 15 kg. With an existing stock pile of scrap tyres sitting at approximately 120,000,000 pieces and the addition of annual scrap sitting at around 10,000,000 - 12,000,000 pieces, created annually, you're looking at roughly R414, 000,000 per annum of levies," explains Taplin.

"Since the REDISA plan proposes to begin collection (not disposal) of tyres only in 10 months time, it is envisaged that they will only begin their recycling activities from so called "home grown industries" in approximately four years. By that stage, it is reasonable to assume that nearly R3, 000,000,000 (three billion rand) would have been paid by the South African consumer in levies. Can the consumer afford this on top of e-tolling, plastic bag recycle levies and rampant electricity and fuel cost increases?" asks Taplin.

While the questionable Integrated Industry Waste Tyre Management Plan (IIWTMP) is said to come into full effect in February 2012, consumer champions like Taplin have declared not to give up the fight against a scheme that potentially has

too many political concerns and potentially could invite corruption as opposed to a genuine solution. To date, REDISA has received minimal support from local tyre manufacturers, importers and tyre retailers. It is also very monopolistic to assume one single plan, and even the Environmental Waste Management Act caters for more than one participant, a fact which the Government and REDISA seem to have overlooked

" I believe that the IIWTMP is to the Tyre Industry, what the Secrecy Bill is to the media and to every South African citizen - people need to understand the issues and get involved before it is too late. Recycling is important - The industry must take charge of this initiative, but consumers too must insist that their rights are not transgressed," ends Taplin

For more information on REDISA and the Integrated Industry Waste Tyre Management Plan visit www.redisa.org.za

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