

In the world today, the more the economy develops, the more power is used. Around 90% of power used by the humankind comes from fuel, mainly from petrol. The petrol usage is causing pollution in Vietnam and many other countries now.

Compared with other Southeast Asian countries, the per capita petrol consumption of Vietnam is of the lowest. This consumption in Vietnam increased from 57 kg in 1993 to 60 kg in 1994 while this figure in Indonesia was 100 kg, the Philippines: 200 kg, Thailand: 300 kg, Malaysia: 600 kg and Singapore: 2,180 kg. Considering this level of petrol consumption, the pollution caused by petrol usage may not create problem in Vietnam, but in fact the pollution has become alarming, especially in big cities such as HCMC.

The pollution caused by petrol usage shows itself in 3 cases:

1. Air pollution

According to the HCMC Service of Science, Technology and Environment, the level of air pollution at various surveyed sites was from 10 to 20 times higher than the acceptable level (of noise, dust and hazardous substances). Causes of this pollution are:

- There are too many vehicles on too narrow streets. In HCMC at present, there are over one million motorbikes, some 11,000 cars, 5,000 motortrikes. These vehicles consume from 200 to 250 tonnes of petrol everyday and release a lot of pollutants.

- A large percentage of these vehicles is of old models which were produced from 10 to 30 years before. These vehicles produce a lot of noise and exhaust fumes.

- petrol used in Vietnam is of low quality such as FO and DO oils, leaded petrol... therefore many hazardous substances are present in exhaust emissions.

- Some hundred thousand tonnes of FO oil are consumed everyday by manufacturing factories which released a lot of waste gases. The Thủ Đức Power Plant, for example, consumes some hundred tonnes of oil and releases some tonnes of ash everyday.

2. Pollution of land and water

The accidents of two oil tankers (Taiwanese Uni Humanity and Singaporean Neptune) have polluted a large area in Nhà Bè district and caused enormous damage which hasn't been repaired yet.

The Vietnam market consumes some 100,000 tonnes of lubricant every year. This amount of used lubricant hasn't been collected and



TO PREVENT POLLUTION CAUSED BY PETROL USAGE

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treated. It was poured carelessly into the sewerage while there is no sewage works in HCMC, so it has polluted the system of canals and rivers.

3. Pollution of sea and beach

Vietnam has a shoreline of over 2,000 km long by the main shipping

route across the Pacific. Because of the too long shoreline, the coast guard forces can't supervise our territorial waters night and day, many foreign ships have poured their waste matter (including used lubricant or oil sludge) onto the sea and polluted our beaches (Bến Tre beach for example).

Although the above mentioned facts are of little importance in comparison with the environment pollution in other countries, but they showed that the danger of pollution caused by petrol would become greater and greater.

Because of a high growth rate, petrol consumption in Vietnam will increase by 18% to 20% every year. According to experts' estimation, Vietnam will consume 8 million tonnes of petrol in 2000. This figure will increase to 13 million in 2005, 20 million in 2010 (65% of this amount will be used by Southern provinces). So the government had better think of measures to prevent pollution caused by petrol usage.

In the world today, the development should include the four following factors: improvement in quality of life, reduction in the gap between the rich and the poor, the environment protection and natural resources protection. The Law on the Environment has been promulgated in Vietnam, that is, all persons and organizations should take appropriate measures to protect the environment. The following are our suggestions about this matter:

- The Government had better introduce an incentive scheme to encourage factories to change from using FO or DO oils to using natural gas, especially power, paper, sugar, glass, ceramic factories.

- Soft loans should be supplied to the projects building gas pipeline from offshore Vũng Tàu and processing natural gas.

- Import duties on imported gas could be reduced in order to encourage the people to use gas instead of oil, coal or wood.

- To make regulations of the quality of imported petrol in order to encourage usage of high-quality petrol (a ban on the import of leaded petrol is a good measure).

- To build an oil tanker port in Vũng Tàu and the pipelines from Vũng Tàu to HCMC and from HCMC to Southern provinces with a view to reducing the transport of petrol by rivers.

- To study and impose pollution tax, especially on the usage of low-quality petrol in order to raise funds for environment protection ■