

Annex I

Response from the Republic of Korea to a request for more information that justifies the request for extension of specific exemptions for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds; and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride, including on reasons why alternatives are not available and expected volumes of use and emissions

(Transmitted by email on 27 December 2024)

"...Korea submitted the formats for country reporting for requesting extension of specific exemption, marking several information as "unavailable". The reason is that most of the information is confidential business information of domestic industries and overseas raw material manufacturers, which makes us difficult to know relevant information.

As we know, existing stockpiles of PFOS- and PFOA-containing fire-fighting foam amount to 1,700 tons at maximum. Their available alternatives are fluorine-free natural surfactant and synthetic surfactant in Korea.

On this occasion, I would like to briefly explain the reason why the Republic of Korea requested the extension of specific exemptions on PFOS- or PFOA-containing fire-fighting foam.

In Korea, PFOS- or PFOA-containing fire-fighting foam is prohibited to manufacture, import or place on the market. However, we have existing stockpiles of PFOS- or PFOA-containing fire-fighting foam.

When requesting the extension, we considered possibilities that it may need more time to treat the existing stockpiles in an environmentally-sound manner, and the existing stockpiles may be used during the above environmentally-sound treatment period at petrochemical plant, airport, or others when large fire occurs but performance of available alternatives is not enough for such fire.

The Korean government keeps consulting with relevant government agencies and the industries for environmentally-sound treatment of the existing stockpiles.

We plan to accelerate environmentally-sound treatment as soon as possible, and withdraw the registration of specific exemptions before 2 June 2031 that is the next period for extending specific exemptions.

It seems that many Parties, including the EU, are in the similar situation.

If the Secretariat knows the information about existing stockpiles of PFOS- or PFOA-containing fire-fighting foam of other Parties, it would be very appreciated if you share it with us.

Plus, it would be very appreciated if you take into account the above reasons of our extension request when you prepare a report to be considered at the 12th COPs to the Stockholm Convention next year."