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# Full-scale Use of Recycled Materials in Bottled Water and Beverage PET Bottles

- Legislative notice on the partial amendment of the Resources Recycling Act's Sub-Regulations, from February 21 for 40 days

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Kim Wansup) will announce a legislative notice for the amendment of the sub-regulations of the Act on the Promotion of Saving and Recycling of Resources from February 21 for a period of 40 days, aiming to promote the use of recycled plastic raw materials.

This amendment is designed to enhance the use of recycled raw materials by changing the obligated industries and entities that are required to use recycled plastic raw materials.

In recent times, the international community has been mandating the use of recycled raw materials to reduce plastic usage. Notably, the European Union (EU) has made it mandatory to increase the proportion of recycled raw materials in the production of PET food and beverage bottles to 25% by 2025, with plans to raise this proportion to 30% by 2030. In the United States (California), regulations require the use of recycled raw materials equivalent to 25% for plastic packaging by 2025 and 50% by 2030.

In line with this global trend, in 2023, the Ministry of Environment established that producers of raw materials who produce more than 10,000 tons of PET\* synthetic resin annually are obligated to use a minimum of 3% recycled raw materials. However, there is a need for system improvement

since, even if these producers manufacture PET raw materials using recycled raw materials, the final product manufacturers (PET bottle producers) do not utilize them.

\* Polyethylene Terephthalate Resin (PET)

In this amendment of the sub-regulations, the Ministry of Environment has changed the obligated industries for the use of recycled plastic raw materials from PET raw material producers to the bottled water production industry and other non-alcoholic beverage manufacturing industries that use more than 5,000 tons of PET annually.

In addition, the ‘Recycling Guidelines for Designated Recycling Businesses’ have also been revised and publicly notified to increase the target rate for the obligation of raw material producers to use recycled materials from the existing 3% to 10%.

Furthermore, there are plans to gradually increase the target rate for the use of recycled raw materials to 30% by 2030, while expanding the obligated users to include those who produce more than 1,000 tons of final products annually.

In the future, the ministry plans to identify additional items suitable for the use of recycled raw materials, such as home appliances, automotive interior materials, and cosmetic containers, and establish usage targets thereof, in order to expand the use of recycled plastic raw materials.

This amendment to the sub-regulations is expected to enhance\* the use of recycled raw materials by imposing an obligation on raw material producers and final product manufacturers, who play a significant role in the recycling value chain of the PET bottle market.

\* Around 10 companies manufacturing bottled water and beverages are expected to use

approximately 20,000 tons of recycled materials annually.

The detailed information regarding this amendment is available on the website of the National Participation Legislative Center ([opinion.lawmaking.go.kr](http://opinion.lawmaking.go.kr)). After gathering opinions from stakeholders and various parties, the amended sub-regulations will go through a review by the Ministry of Government Legislation and the Cabinet meeting, with the aim of being promulgated and implemented within the year.

Kim Go-eung, the Director of the Resources Circulation Bureau at the Ministry of Environment, stated, “This amendment to the sub-regulations will have a direct effect in promoting the use of recycled plastic materials.” He added, “As concerns about the rapidly increasing plastic waste worldwide are high, the Ministry of Environment will make every effort in policy initiatives to expand the recycling of waste plastics.”