October, 2009

Sumitomo Chemical Announces Raw Material (Feedstock) Conversion for Alumina Products

Sumitomo Chemical has announced that it will convert the feedstock used for alumina products in April 2010 in order to cease as soon as possible the disposal through sea dumping of the residues from current feedstock bauxite, while continuing to provide a stable supply of its alumina products.

Alumina products refer to materials such as aluminum hydroxide yielded from the refining of bauxite, alumina (calcined alumina) made from aluminum hydroxide, activated alumina, aluminum sulfate, poly aluminum chloride, and sodium aluminate. Alumina products are used in a wide range of areas such as LED substrates, fine ceramics for IC packages and automotive spark plugs, water treatment agents, artificial marble, and glass substrate for LCDs. Sumitomo Chemical produces a broad variety of alumina products at its Ehime Works in Ehime, Japan, with an annual capacity of approximately 200 thousand tons.

The residue from the extraction of aluminum hydroxide in the refining of bauxite is composed of insoluble mineral constituents, and Sumitomo Chemical disposes of this residue through sea dumping in an appropriate manner in accordance with Japanese law. Nevertheless, at the 2005 Scientific Group Meeting of the London Convention, Japan committed to cease the sea dumping of bauxite residue by 2015, and this presents a challenge for Japanese producers of alumina products. In order to cease the sea dumping of bauxite residue as early as possible, while at the same time fulfilling its responsibility to provide a stable supply of various alumina products, Sumitomo Chemical has been exploring the use of imported aluminum hydroxide as a feedstock to enable the continuous production of high-quality alumina products.

Sumitomo Chemical has confirmed that it can supply all of its alumina products produced using imported aluminum hydroxide at an equivalent quality to those previously produced, and, having obtained the understanding of its major customers, plans to convert to the new feedstock in April 2010. The Company has already obtained the understanding of its customers about the use of imported aluminum hydroxide for its water treatment agents　and some of the alumina and by switching to the new feedstock the Company is working to reduce the amount of residues generated and reduce its impact on the ocean environment. After fully converting to the new feedstock in April 2010, the Company will generate no residues in production, and additionally, any residues remaining at the production facility will be treated, enabling the Company to completely cease sea dumping in the near term.

Sumitomo Chemical will continue to pursue “Sustainable Chemistry,” helping people live more fulfilling, comfortable lives by providing high-performance, high-quality and highly reliable products in an environmentally responsible manner while also contributing to economic growth and the sustainable development of society.