

Vini Mahajan, IAS

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CSO/2020/720  
Chief Secretary to Govt. of Punjab  
Chandigarh - 160 001

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Dated - 23.09.2020

**Sub: Regarding early incidents of crop residue burning in the State of Punjab.**

Dear Sir,

Kindly refer to your D.O No. EPCA-R/2020/L30 September 22, 2020 regarding early incidents of burning of crop residue in the State.

In this context, it is intimated that we have also received alerts from the State Monitoring Agency about a few paddy residue burning incidents in the Majha Region as the area grows vegetables immediately after the harvest of paddy. The area is not a part of the Hot Spot districts and the window of time available to these farmers to manage the residues is too short for timely plantation of next crop.

However, taking a serious note of early incidents of crop residue burning, the concerned Deputy Commissioners were asked to send report after field verification. The DC, Amritsar, in whose jurisdiction maximum number of fire incidents occurred, has reported that Sub-Divisional Magistrates have been directed to collect environmental compensation through challans. The challans are being issued with the help of new app launched recently. In addition, revenue patwaris have been directed to make entries in revenue record of violating farmers. DC has also focussed attention on those hotspot villages, where maximum number of burning incidents took place during the last paddy season. Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Agricultural Officers along with other teams of Officers have been deputed to monitor these villages so that the burning of crop residue in these villages is stopped altogether. A massive awareness drive has also been initiated. DC, TarnTaran has also issued challan to the defaulting farmer. In another district on verification, it was found that the fire incidents reported were not of crop residue burning.

Further, as you are aware, we are making efforts to comply with the directions of the Hon'ble Apex Court and have taken steps to implement the Strategy cum Action Plan to Control this menace involving multi Departments, Agencies/ Boards, NGOs and Civil Society.

The State has implemented the Central Sector Scheme for Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for *In-situ* Management of Crop Residues and the necessary machinery is being supplied to the farmers, their groups and co-operative societies on priority. However, the demand for machinery is almost triple the planned targets and in view of the limited funds available, the sanctions have been issued with a ceiling on the subsidy.

The State Pollution Control Board has issued Notice cum Advisory to all Combine Harvester Operators to make it compulsory to install Super SMS on their machines and also to ensure their use at the time of harvesting. State is also providing Balers and Rakes for collection of Paddy/ Basmati residues where ever it can be put to an economical use and the districts under the Hot Spots have been provided higher targets.

Meetings with the stakeholders have been conducted and all the concerned officers have been directed to implement the decisions taken in the meetings in letter and spirit and as per schedule. Already orders under Section 144 of Cr PC have been issued in many districts and the District Magistrates have been advised to take immediate action against the defaulting farmers after verification of paddy residue burning incidents.

I assure you that I am in continuous touch with key officers and a control room has been set-up to monitor the burning incidents as well as distribution of machinery and we will strive to achieve the sowing of wheat with efficient management of crop residue this season.

*With regards*

Yours sincerely,

  
(Vini Mahajan)

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