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MNRE emphasized the cooperation to reduce plastic waste from online food delivery.

Mr. Athapol Charoenshunsa, Director General of Pollution Control Department (PCD) revealed that the consumption of plastic packaging has increased dramatically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This results from the government's policies such as Lock Down, Work from Home, prohibiting or limiting the number of people to eat in restaurants, and encouraging eating at home. All of these have led people to buy food through online food delivery services, which has increased the amount of plastic waste. Most of the plastic food packaging is single-use plastics such as foam food containers, plastic boxes, plastic bags with handles, hot-cold bags, seasoning sachets, plastic cutlery, plastic glasses, and plastic straws, etc.

Mr. Athapol said that Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) by PCD has cooperated with food delivery companies, including LINE MAN, Grab, Food Panda and Lalamove, since September 2020 to adapt the Auto opt-out platform by stopping the distribution of plastic products, encouraging restaurants to use environmentally friendly products, and increasing the choice for consumers to opt out of single-use plastics in food delivery applications. As a result, consumers, restaurants, and online food delivery companies are increasingly focusing on the problem of plastic waste in the country. As can be seen from the data, the consumption of single-use plastics has decreased by 20% (Plastic bags, plastic glasses, plastic straws, and foam food containers: information from the Thai Plastic Industries Association, August 2021).

However, the dispersion of the COVID-19 pandemic makes the amount of using of plastic packaging increasingly. In addition, online food delivery services are convenient and more restaurants are joining the service. Online food delivery services have promotions for food discounts and free delivery. They also participate in the “Half-Half Co-Payment Scheme” . While entrepreneurs are used to distribute single-use plastics, consumers can participate in reducing plastic waste by opting out of single-use plastics for online food delivery services. If plastic packaging is needed, people can sort and clean it for recycling or donate it to the “Making Merit with Plastic” project (when you recycle).

Mr. Athapol said that solving environmental problems, especially plastic waste problems, requires cooperation from all sectors (public, private and people sectors) to be a part of plastic waste management from the beginning step (manufacturers), the middle step (consumers and restaurants) to the final step (recycling) to separate and recycle used plastics.

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