

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the letter dated 7.9.2018 of the Chief Secretary,  
Government of Tamil Nadu addressed to the Secretary, Ministry of Water  
Resources, RD&GR (Ground Water), Government of India

"We have received your Office Memorandum along with the copy of the suo moto study report on the ground water contamination in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu done by the Central Ground Water Board only on 5.9.2018.

We are extremely perturbed that the Ministry of Water Resources, RD & GR, Government of India chose to commission a study and obtain a report from Central Ground Water Board in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, without any intimation to the Government of TamilNadu or to any statutory authorities including the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB).

As you know, TNPCB, after detailed investigation and analysis of all the relevant factors, has taken a decision to refuse renewal of consent for the Sterlite Copper Smelting Plant in Tuticorin. On the basis of scientific studies, TNPCB has concluded that the level of pollution caused by the Sterlite Copper Smelting Plant has gravely affected the health and safety of residents in the locality, warranting closure of the industry. To safeguard the environment, a fundamental duty is imposed on the State by virtue of Article 48-A of the Constitution of India and hence the Government of Tamil Nadu had ordered permanent closure of the industry.

The circumstances under which the Ministry of Water Resources, RD & GR, Government of India has asked Central Ground Water Board to carry out the assessment of the quality of water in the area, especially when the statutory authority in the State (TNPCB) has conducted detailed studies and when the matter is sub-judice before the Appellate Authority, National Green Tribunal, Hon'ble High Court of Madras and Hon'ble Supreme Court of India are, to say the least, lacking in bonafides and is inappropriate at this point of time. Moreover in the concluding para of the report it has been stated as follows:

*"It is to mention that the investigation team couldn't enter into the premises of M/s. Sterlite Copper Industry for collection of representative samples from inside and outside of industry; because district authorities sealed the Sterlite Copper Plant following the Governments order to close down the plant permanently.*

*Therefore, it can't be stated that M/s. Sterilte Industry is only cause of pollution indicated above."*

This conclusion, which appears to support the Sterlite Industry, is totally unwarranted, besides, being absolutely vague, and is not supported by any empirical data whatsoever. It does not appear to be made on any scientific basis and it is not known how the two scientists who have submitted the report have made such a vague and an unsubstantiated statement in the report.

The State of Tamil Nadu strongly feels that the report is motivated and has been prepared only to prejudice the Government of Tamil Nadu and the TNPCB cases in various judicial fora. The law and order situation in and around Tuticorin has returned to normalcy and such an unscientific report will be likely to aggravate the law and order situation.

In view of the above we reject the report and request you to immediately withdraw the entire report since the competent statutory authority of the State has already conducted a detailed analysis on which a decision has already been taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu and since the matter is sub-judice before various fora."

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**Issued by : Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.**  
**Dated : 8.9.2018**