China’s First Public Interest Lawsuit Brought by a Grassroots NGO

Jessica Scott
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Nov. 27, 2012
Outline

- Introduction
- Factual background
- Lawsuit
- Reasons the court accepted the case
- Remaining challenges
Environmental Law Professionals Exchange

- National Committee on United States-China Relations
- American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative
- Friends of Nature
Yunnan Province

Wikimedia Commons
Contaminated Water & Livestock Poisonings
Chromium Slag Heaps Totaling 5,000+ Tons

Image: Stringer/China/Reuters, www.guardian.co.uk
Local Government Involvement
Clean-up Efforts
Media Coverage

www.theepochtimes.com
NGO Research and Advocacy
Two NGOs File Suit in the Public Interest

- Friends of Nature and Chong Qing Green Volunteer League asked the court to find the companies jointly liable and called for the companies to:
  - Stop polluting
  - Clean up the site
  - Pay attorney fees and litigation expenses
  - Contribute money to create a fund to pay for damages to the environment.
Why did the court accept this case?

- Yunnan provincial standing law
- NGO partnership with local EPB
- Media attention
Obstacles Remain

- Evidentiary challenges
- Pressure to go to mediation
Thank you!!

谢谢

Contact: scott.jessica@epa.gov