

ENVIRONMENT

Group vows battle over eco-estate

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IRPC Plc's ecological industrial estate plan for Rayong province has won the nod by the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) to begin construction amid warnings by a non-profit group that the legal fight is not finished.

Srisuwan Janya, chairman of the Stop Global Warming Association (SGWA), said his group in September filed another lawsuit against the Ban Khai estate, requesting the court revoke the project's environmental impact assessment (EIA).

"The company has no right to develop the project because the second case has yet to be ruled," he said, adding that if the company insists on further development, the group may file a complaint with the Administrative Court asking for protection until the verdict on the second case is issued.

"They did not give all the required information at the public hearing, while some residents claimed they took part in the public hearing despite not actually being there," said Mr Srisuwan.

"We just want the IEAT and other concerned agencies to be more cautious and follow all the regulations when they develop industrial projects."

In early September, the SGWA won a court ruling concerning a plan by IRPC and the IEAT to set up an eco-estate.

The Rayong Administrative Court ruled in favour of the non-profit group, which represents 400 villagers in Ban Khai district, on the grounds that the proposed estate may lead to pollution and inadequate water supply.

IRPC president Atikom Terbsiri predicts the company will start developing 2,500 rai next year with a total project value of 1.2 billion baht.

He said the Ban Khai project has completed the EIA and received approval from the concerned agencies.

"The court's ruling was based on information from a time when the health and environmental impact assessments were not yet approved," said Mr Atikom.