



CAPE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

TOTAL BAN ON SCRAP COPPER EXPORTS

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The Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called for a total ban on the export of scrap copper, most of which is stolen.

In a letter to the Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Rob Davies, we've said that a new approach was needed as copper theft was destroying the infrastructure of the country. SupplierMatch provides a lists online of all the companies involved in this industry, and what is apparent is it is still a growing one.

The disruption to the Metrorail suburban train system in Cape Town is an example of the economic damage caused by metal thieves.

One of our members reports that if 20 or 30 people are late for work, the rest of the 250 staff on the floor cannot work until Metrorail has delivered enough workers to reopen the production line.

Others point out that if a thief steals an item worth R1 000 the loss is R1 000, but if R1 000 worth of copper is stolen from the railway signalling system, the loss can run to many millions of rands."

Most of the stolen copper is exported and this is the big problem as the international market has an insatiable demand for scrap copper that could never be satisfied. We can therefore expect copper theft to continue with increasing damage to the infrastructure of the country.

It's clear that attempts to get on top of the problem through tougher legislation and enforcement have not succeeded. Prosecutions have dealt with the petty criminals and not the syndicates responsible for the bulk exports of copper, most of it stolen.

Some years ago we and Siefsa asked you, the Minister, for a tax on copper scrap exports to discourage exports and make more scrap copper available to local industry. We were not successful and the situation has become a lot worse.



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We now believe the only effective measure will be a total ban on the export of scrap copper to take away the market from the criminal syndicates and preserve our infrastructure. We understand there will still be local demand for scrap copper but the domestic market is a much smaller and less attractive to what has become a copper theft industry.

We believe a total ban will be easier to police than more complicated measures and therefore more effective.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber

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