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For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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**Exploitation of forest resources for quarrying activities
in the Segari Melintang Forest Reserve is inappropriate and alarming**

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is concerned that the Perak State Authority may approve quarry activities (granite) and laterite mining in an area of land with the status of Permanent Reserved Forest (PRF) in Segari Melintang Forest Reserve (HS Segari Melintang) in the district of Manjung, Perak.

In 2017, SAM had voiced our concern when the State Authority had approved quarry activities in part of Compartments 13, 14, 15 and 16 of HS Segari Melintang.

SAM's objection is because there are already several quarries operating in HS Segari Melintang that had impacted the forest ecosystems and natural coastal area here.

Currently, there are more applications for quarrying activities in part of Compartment 19, 20 and 21 covering an area of about 122 hectares as well as an application for laterite mining activity in part of Compartment 54 covering an area of about 49 hectares.

The approval of quarrying activities in the PRF is contradictory and does not comply with the decision made at the 70th National Land Council (Majlis Tanah Negara - MTN) Meeting in 2014 that all states are urged to take the initiative to control or if possible to avoid any approval of mining and quarrying activities in the PRFs.

Mining and quarrying activities in the PRF area will affect the functions of the forest, threaten biodiversity and not consistent with sustainable forest management which is the core of Malaysia's forest management.

In fact, the trend of exploiting forest resources is not in line and contradicts some other policies and commitments. Among them are:

- i. Malaysia's commitment during the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 and the COP15 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009 to maintain 50% of the country's land area covered with forests;
- ii. National Forestry Policy 1978 (Amendment 1992) which is to manage and develop forest resources sustainably for continuous forest production and services; and
- iii. National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016 - 2025 to safeguard our biodiversity and complement Malaysia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

When an area in a PRF is approved for quarrying, all valuable tree stands will be harvested and the forest cover will be cleared first.

The clear-felling harvesting practice is not subject to the Annual Allowable Cut and the Selective Management System and is not in full compliance with the Malaysian Criteria and Indicators (MC&I) for Forest Management Certification.

In 2016, when SAM submitted our feedback on the Manjung District Draft Local Plan 2030, the recommendation by the Local Investigation Committee is to agree with the objection by the objector (i.e. SAM) and to reject the application for new quarry activities in view of conserving the existing forest area.

In addition to our concerns regarding the exploitation of forest resources in HS Segari Melintang, following is SAM's recommendations to the Perak State Authority for the conservation of the forest reserve:

- > Expedite the proposed gazettelement of the Segari Melintang State Park that has been agreed in principle by the State Authority; and
- > Submit an application for compensation to the Federal Government because the State Government will lack revenue for not permitting the exploitation of the reserved forests and other unsustainable activities in PRF areas.

SAM is extremely concerned with the trend of exploitation of forest resources in HS Segari Melintang and hopes that our recommendations to the Perak State Authority can enhance the state's commitment to sustainably manage the state's forest resources.

Meenakshi Raman
President
Sahabat Alam Malaysia