



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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LOVE AND APPRECIATE THE ENVIRONMENT

The implementation of Phase 1 to 3 of the movement control order (MCO) not only reduced infection rate of the COVID-19 but also helped to educate the public to better appreciate the environment and recognize how it plays an important role in our daily lives.

Although the government has announced a Phase 4 conditional movement control order (CMCO) beginning May 4, 2020 and ending May 12th, 2020, it is not a ticket for us to revert to business-as-usual practices that contribute to environmental pollution or breach environmental laws.

According to a study by air quality experts in Malaysia, since the first week (Phase 1) of MCO came into effect, it was reported that the average air pollution rate was slightly lower than in the normal days before the MCO. The decline in pollution levels was unexpected and it signifies that good air quality can be achieved especially in areas with high levels of pollution by curbing pollution from its source.

Dato' Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, the Environment and Water Minister had stated that the implementation of the MCO nationwide to curb the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak also had a positive impact on the environment.

According to him, based on analysis of several locations including in Cheras (Kuala Lumpur), Putrajaya, Shah Alam, Ipoh, Penang, Kuantan, Seremban, Johor Bahru and Kota Kinabalu, the air quality in the area has improved since the implementation of the MCO.

In fact, the Ministry of Environment and Water was quoted by the daily Sinar Harian, March 29, 2020, stating that the Ministry would continue to monitor that the environment is protected and ensure no pollution, particularly during the MCO since 18 March.

SAM welcomes this move by the Ministry and we view that this should be taken into account by the local authorities and enforcement agencies in maintaining clean air quality, reducing emissions of pollutants and waste discharge from the industries even after the MCO period is over.

The industrial sector must comply with the rules and regulations set by the Department of Environment and local authorities to curb environmental pollution and not to resort to cost-cutting measures by compromising on the environment.

We are concerned that all the improved environmental conditions due to restrictions on economic activities such as improvements to the air and water quality will be reversed due to bad environmental practices and violations of the law, which must be prevented by stringent environmental monitoring and enforcement.

Meenakshi Raman
President
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