



**Sahabat Alam Malaysia**  
**Friends of the Earth Malaysia**  
For Environmental Justice

1, Jalan Joki, 11400 Penang, Malaysia  
Tel No: +604 827 6930  
Fax No: +604 827 6932  
Email: foemalaysia@gmail.com  
<https://www.foe-malaysia.org>

**Press Release**

**8 January 2020**

### **Call On Penang Government Not To Proceed With Cable Car Proposal**

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) and the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) wish to reiterate our stand that we do not support the proposal for a cable-car project for Penang Hill, as such a project would affect negatively the sensitive and fragile ecosystems of both the Hill and the Penang Botanic Gardens.

The breakdown of the existing funicular railway cannot be used as an excuse to push the cable-car project, without investigating the causes for the breakdown and how to prevent them in the future.

We understand that the maintenance works for the funicular railway are carried out only once in 12 months. With the overuse of the railway and infrequent maintenance, there is bound to be a breakdown. What must now happen is more frequent maintenance works which could be once in 9 months instead, which can prevent the railway from breaking down.

Hence, improving the frequency of the maintenance of the railway must be the most immediate step, that will avert the need for the cable-car.

The cable car project is not environmentally sustainable, both to the Hill and the Gardens and to assume so, would be misleading. In addition, the cable car project if implemented will cause irreparable damage to the Gardens and Penang Hill through the building of more hotels, bungalows for the rich elites, cafes, amusement joints and roads.

According to media reports, the CM has said that 8 to 10 pylons would be needed to support the cable-car network which connects at a station near the Penang Rifle Club at the Botanic Gardens to the hilltop at the entrance of the Habitat.

Firstly, the Penang Rifle Club is not outside the Botanic Gardens as claimed by the CM as it is within the Special Area Plan of the Gardens. Already, on a daily basis in the mornings and on public holidays, the Gardens are very crowded with large numbers of people and there are massive jams. With a cable-car station near the Rifle Club, the traffic situation will be even more aggravated, changing the nature of the Gardens to one that is noisy and even more unbearable.

Secondly, in order to carry out the cable-car project, a major issue will be on how the heavy pylons are going to be brought in and installed, which will require road-building, excavation and construction work. In addition, once the construction works are over, maintenance tracks below the cable-car line will be needed and all this

will cause much disruption to very fragile and environmentally sensitive areas which Penang Hill and the Botanic Gardens are.

For these reasons, SAM and CAP appeal and urge the Penang State Government not to proceed with the cable-car proposal.

If the Government insists on doing so despite our objections and concerns, then we call for very comprehensive and thorough studies to be done and evaluated on the environmental and social impacts of the cable-car project on both the Hill and the Botanic Gardens prior to taking any decision on the project.

The Penang Chief Minister, Chow Kon Yeow has said in a media report yesterday, that pre-feasibility studies of the project are ongoing, while a full technical study will be carried out as the next step.

Such studies must ensure that the environmental and social impacts both to the Hill and the Gardens are not viewed lightly, given the special characteristics and nature of both these special ecosystems.

We call on the Penang State Government to make transparent and public the following:

1. The terms of reference of the studies, and clarify if they include comprehensive environmental and social impacts on the Hill and the Gardens;
2. Who is conducting the studies;
3. Make public these studies and
4. Clarify which are the companies vying for the cable-car project.

**Meenakshi Raman**  
**President**  
**Sahabat Alam Malaysia**

**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers Association of Penang**