



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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CAP and SAM welcome federal government's clarification about Penang reclamation project

CAP and SAM are relieved to read the clarification by Federal Territories Minister Khalid Abdul Samad that the National Physical Planning Council (NPPC) has not approved the Penang South Reclamation (PSR) project.

We welcome very much the decision of the NPPC not to approve the reclamation project as yet but to give 18 conditions to the state government, and to ask the state to engage with local communities and ensure their needs are considered.

Yesterday we had expressed dismay about the statement by Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow that the NPPC had approved the project with 18 "advices," after the NPPC meeting chaired by the Prime Minister.

Now it seems the Chief Minister has jumped the gun and made a misleading statement about the approval by the federal government's Physical Planning Council.

We very much welcome the clarification by Minister Khalid Samad that in fact "the council did not give any approval or make any decision on the project and instead it gave the state government 18 conditions."

We also appreciate very much the Minister's statement that "the state government was also advised to continue engaging with the local community and ensure their needs are given due consideration."

CAP and SAM together with other NGOs have been very active in analysing the proposed reclamation project as well as other projects like PIL1, the undersea tunnel and paired roads, which together form the Penang Transport Master Plan (PTMP).

We will continue to be active in getting our views known to the state and federal governments and agencies, and to engage with the authorities and the local communities.

We reiterate our view that the reclamation and other projects of the PTMP are very damaging to Penang and Malaysia in the financial, environmental, cultural, heritage and local community aspects.

There are much cheaper, better and environmentally sound ways of improving transport in Penang, instead of the RM46 billion monstrous project proposed by the state government.

We just cannot understand why the projects are so over-priced, and at a time when the country is trying to save money. For example, the PIL1 highway project is estimated to cost RM8 billion for 20 km of road, or RM400 million per km. This is far above the RM68 mil per km cost of the revised ECRL federal project and also much above many other highway and road projects in Malaysia.

Obviously the whole transport plan of the state government has to be reviewed from many aspects.

Meanwhile, we urge the Chief Minister not to make any further statements about the projects that are misleading. In recent days he announced the reclamation project was approved by the federal-level National Physical Planning Council (when it was not), and that the Dept of Environment had approved the EIA for the PIL1 project (although later he admitted the EIA contained faulty information about hill-slopes with the mistakes caused by a computer), and that the MACC had closed a corruption probe against the main company involved in the undersea tunnel project.

Surely it is for these agencies to make any announcements, and not the CM to appear to be a spokesman for the National Physical Planning Council, the Dept of Environment or the MACC anti-corruption agency.

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