



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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**Media Statement**

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## **CAP is Disappointed with Penang EXCO's statement WILLING TO DESTROY MANGROVE FORESTS FOR THE SAKE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is disappointed with the statement by YB Phee Boon Poh, Penang State EXCO for Welfare, Caring Society and Environment quoted in a Malay Daily implying that the State is willing to destroy the mangroves in Bagan Jermal to make way for the implementation of a reclamation project here.

According to YB Phee, the felling of the 9.38 hectares of mangrove forest here is for the purpose of generating income for the state rather than leaving it idle without producing any revenue. Commenting on a news article published in Berita Harian today, CAP requests YB Phee to produce findings that the mangroves in the said area does not have any benefits for the environment and livelihood of the local fishers.

CAP hopes that he is not gazing stars in the sky (development projects) whilst forgetting the grass on the ground (the environment and livelihood of the people). The remaining mangrove forests in Bagan Jermal and rest of the State are valuable natural treasures in case the Environment EXCO wants to compare it with development projects proposed by the Penang government.

The value of Malaysian mangroves just for storm protection and flood control has been estimated at USD 300,000 per km of coastline, which is based on the cost of replacing the mangroves with rock walls (Ramsar Secretariat, 2001). Mangrove trees also store large amounts of carbon. The mangrove forests function as a carbon sink contribute to mitigating climate change.

Mangrove forests in this area not only protect the coastal areas from natural hazards such as storms, tidal waves and tsunami but mangroves are also a breeding ground for marine life that are source of income for the fisher communities and their future generation and also food supply for the people. UNEP-WCMC report of 2006 states that mangrove forests in Peninsular Malaysia, support a fishery worth of US\$250,000/km<sup>2</sup>/year.

CAP is disappointed that a state EXCO for environment and welfare does not understand the wholistic functions of mangroves and benefits to the environment and economy. CAP wants YB Phee to check out what has happened to the environment, fish stock and livelihood of coastal fishers in Balik Pulau and Seberang Perai Selatan as a result of mangrove destruction in these areas.

CAP strongly objects the reclamation projects in the State and urges the Penang government to cancel all development projects that involve mangrove forests and adversely impact the environment, lives and livelihood of the people. CAP views that a large-scale mangrove replanting project has to be implemented in suitable areas to regenerate and conserve these natural treasures.

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