



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to the Editor

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Need for transparency over ‘Medical City’ proposal

The Consumers’ Association of Penang (CAP) is very concerned that more and more public lands are being transferred to private hands without transparency and public knowledge.

In the latest case in Penang, we have come to learn that the State government’s 6.4-acre land owned by Chief Minister Incorporated at Peel Avenue was sold for RM156 million on a 99-year lease for the construction of a RM2billion “medical city” project by a private hospital.

The Chief Minister of Penang, Lim Guan Eng, announced last week that the deal with the hospital was signed last year and was kept under wraps as the State government wanted to “respect non-disclosure agreements” as the principal investors were foreigners and were part of listed companies.

We are disappointed that details of the project did not come sooner, so that the public may be able to provide their feedback. Such a practice would have been in line with the principles of good governance and transparency that the State government espouses.

Given the location of the proposed ‘medical city’, we are concerned about the social impact of the project on the surroundings, including traffic concerns.

We also have grave concerns about the trees that line Peel Avenue and are worried about any possible dislocation or tree cutting that may result.

Given the above, we call on the Penang State government to ensure the following:

1. that a proper traffic impact assessment is done and is made public, so that the feedback is sought.
2. provide further details as to the fate of the trees lining Peel Avenue.
3. provide further details so that the public is properly appraised of what the plans are.
4. ensure that the building of the health care facilities is truly beneficial and affordable to the local people of Penang and not just cater to foreigners.

If these steps are taken, then it will allay the fears and concerns that the project has raised. We urge the Penang State Government to be more transparent and conduct meaningful public consultation with regards to issues of public interest such as this.

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