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Media Statement

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**Investigate factories operating in Seri Juru Industrial Park, Penang**

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) urges the Seberang Perai City Council, Department of Environment, Department of Irrigation and Drainage, Seberang Perai Tengah District & Land Office to conduct an investigation of the factories operating in the Seri Juru Industrial Park, specifically with regards to their license to operate, the status of land ownership, drainage system and whether the effluents that are discharged from the factories are treated.

SAM's survey and observation here found that most of the factories operating here are in the heavy industry category and there are even a few that did not display their signboards providing information about the factory. Besides this, we found piles of plastic waste at one of the premises presumably for recycling. We could not ascertain whether the plastic is imported or sourced locally but the large bales of plastic waste can be clearly seen outside as well as in the interior of the premises.

We also found several aquaculture ponds operating adjacent to the industrial site. Furthermore, the water in the drains in this industrial area looks black and emanating a bad odour as though it is contaminated with untreated sewage and other pollutants. This was especially so in the larger drain (DID Drain - PT. 10 - Bukit Minyak) i.e. the main drainage channel for the smaller drains and ditches here.

In addition, very significant mud deposits can be seen when the tidal water recedes. The relevant authorities must investigate the source of the mud whether it is from the aquaculture activities or elsewhere. What is of concern is that the polluted water directly enters the mouth of the Jawi River when the sluice gate is opened.

SAM is concerned about the water quality in the waters here and the nearby estuary, besides the threat to marine life and the impact on the nearby fishing community. We randomly interviewed some anglers who were fishing near the mouth of the river regarding the flow of water that looked dirty and black. They stated that on many occasions they saw blackish water entering the sluice and then released into the Jawi River. They also questioned the level of pollution from industries in the area.

The authorities need to pay close attention to this pollution issue as this area is relatively remote, far from public access and thus illegal activities may take place. If the investigation carried out by the authorities finds that there are illegal and polluting activities by the industries here then appropriate action in accordance with the law should be taken.

In this regard, SAM urges the relevant authorities to conduct an investigation and take stern action against any party who conducts illegal and polluting activities. The pollution here needs to be curbed before it becomes more serious.

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**Sahabat Alam Malaysia**