



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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## Press Statement

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### Punish the culprits in the harshest way

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) calls on the government to amend the law to punish culprits who pollute the environment in harshest way because their deeds are going to affect the lives of millions of people. The seriousness of the impact is clearly seen in the case of Air Selangor that supplies water to more than 8 million consumers in Selangor, Putrajaya, and Kuala Lumpur.

Water source is highly vulnerable to pollution and sabotage and as illustrated in the four unscheduled shutdowns below: -In June 2019, odour pollution was detected in the raw water source in Sungai Semenyih. It affected 512 areas in Petaling, Hulu Langat, Kuala Langat and Sepang involving 377,141 registered customers.

1. On July 19, odour pollution was detected in the raw water source in Sungai Selangor. A total of 1,133 areas in the Klang Valley involving 1,166,842 registered customers in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling, Klang/Shah Alam, Kuala Selangor, Hulu Selangor, Gombak and Kuala Langat.
2. A few days later, diesel contamination was detected in the water source in Sungai Selangor, resulting in four water treatment plants having to shutdown. It affected 1.2 million registered customers in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling, Klang, Shah Alam, Kuala Selangor, Hulu Selangor, Gombak and Kuala Langat
3. In the December 2019 incident, 50 cubic metres of illegal waste was disposed into the Semenyih River, resulting in dry taps to 1.5 million Selangor residents.

Has any of the culprits who caused such dangerous water disruption been hauled to court and if they had, what was the penalty? We have not heard of any so far although there were reports of sand mining activities and factories being the suspects. There was even a name of a sand mining company being mentioned but that was about all.

The government should not hesitate to take stern action on those found guilty:

- Make jail sentence mandatory.
- Impose hefty fines as a deterrent.
- Make those who cause the pollution pay for the clean-up.
- Suspend factory operating licenses for a period of five years.

The current problem has been the result of a lack of protection of the water source for decades, thereby enabling several hundred factories to be sited along the river reserve. Moreover, individuals and sewage plants are able to dump their waste into the rivers.

We would urge the government to locate any manufacturing and commercial activity away from the river reserve. Install close circuit TV cameras besides having the river reserve patrolled 24/7. There are already existing laws empowering local councils, Department of Environment, and the Drainage and Irrigation Department to enforce and protect the water resources.

There is a need to lay a raw water pipeline from the Semenyih Dam to the water treatment plant so as to protect the raw water supply. The problem that is grossly lacking is the enforcement of the laws.

We reiterate our call to the government to impose mandatory jail sentence and hefty fines; make the culprits pay for the cleaning-up of the water, and suspend the licenses of factory licenses for five years. Contaminating water supply is equivalent to a criminal offence by poisoning the population and causing extreme inconvenience to everyone affected who has to collect water for their daily consumption from other sources. The culprits should be taught that crime does not pay.

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President  
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