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For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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Sungai Kerian river bank erosion must be addressed immediately

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) urges the Penang Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) to take immediate measures to prevent further erosion of the riverbanks of Sungai Kerian before it gets worse.

Based on the survey conducted by SAM, we found that the Sungai Kerian riverbank erosion needs serious and immediate attention as many parts of the riverbank is being increasingly eroded.

The cause for the erosion is likely due to various factors. Therefore, the relevant authorities need to study and examine all the contributing factors and must take appropriate action to mitigate and prevent further erosion from happening.

A number of fishermen and anglers interviewed by SAM claimed that one of the causes of erosion is due to waves created by large boats hauling cargo back and forth along the river to the fish landing platform located at Jalan Ban Sungai Tok Tuntong, Nibong Tebal.

In fact, the river fishermen had raised this issue in the past to the relevant departments, pointing out the impacts if many large boats continue to use the Sungai Kerian as a main route. The plying boats will not only cause riverbank erosion but they were concerned about their safety too.

According to them, the overwhelming number of aquaculture ponds that are located very close to the riverbanks are also among the factors that caused the erosion as well as the deterioration of river water quality caused by the effluents discharged into the Kerian River.

The relevant authorities must go down to the ground to conduct a survey to identify whether the allegations are substantial and to resolve the issue.

During the duration of our survey, SAM had the opportunity to witness large boats carrying cargo to the fish landing platform. It is evident that the waves from the large boats traversing the river could cause more serious erosion if there are no natural barriers or strong retaining walls to prevent the collapse of the river bank.

Uncontrolled development and activities, either legal or illegal, can cause river banks to become unstable. SAM urges the Penang DID and the State to take immediate and appropriate action in the management of the river as well as to prevent further erosion of the riverbanks of Sungai Kerian.

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