



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

11 February 2018

Villagers Worried Over Sand Dredging Operation in Sedim, Baling, Kedah

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is very concerned about the sand dredging operations in Kampung Pekan Sedim and Kampung Bukit Rawa, Sedim, in the district of Baling, Kedah, of which a large number of villagers here are worried.

Residents of four villages in the surrounding area, namely Kampung Bukit Rawa, Kampung Pekan Sedim, Kampung Gelugur and Kampung Kepala Titi expressed their concern over the sand dredging activities as various problems will arise if the operations continue. Among the problems are that their daily lives will be affected, and the main route of Kampung Bukit Rawa road will also be used by large lorries transporting the dredged sand.

The parties concerned should be aware that the road is the main route used by the villagers to send their children to school, shuttle to work and so on. Furthermore most houses are at the edge of the road and thus the villagers will face various problems related to environmental pollution such as vehicle emissions, sand dust and noise from the lorries exhaust.

SAM has been monitoring this area since the villagers informed us of the impending project. The information we obtained from the Kulim District and Land Office in October 2016 stated that the sand dredging operation was still in the application stage and that the consideration for approval will be discussed at the One Stop Centre (OSC) meeting of the Kedah State Land and Mines Office.

We are dismayed that the responsible authorities such as the Kulim Land and District Office, Baling Land and District Office, Kedah Land and Mines Office, Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) did not seriously consider the complaints made by SAM and local residents.

In fact SAM had also sent several letters to the relevant authorities to find out the latest situation of the project but until now we have yet to receive a reply. In this regard, we would like to know whether the application for sand dredging has been approved by the Kedah Land and Mines Office or is it still in the process of approval.

SAM is worried that if the sand dredging operations continue then the lorries plying the area will endanger and threaten the safety of the villagers, especially children. In addition, the sand dredging activity is likely to destabilise soil structure which may result in erosion. Restoration works will take long and will require large expenditure which will result in a loss to the State as a result of the rehabilitation cost.

The sand dredging works will cause negative impacts to the environment, particularly if the operations do not comply with the guidelines stipulated by the authorities. This issue should be taken seriously by all parties as it involves the future state of the environment here as well as flora, fauna and local communities. Therefore, the project needs to be thoroughly assessed before a decision is taken in the

interest of the environment and the people.

In relation to this, SAM urges the Kedah State Government, Baling Land and District Office, Kulim Land and District Office, Kedah State Land and Mines Office and Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) take appropriate action to address this issue so that it is resolved transparently and prudently.

The authorities also need to go to the ground to meet and discuss with the local villagers here so that their problem can be solved and the voices of the communities are heard.

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President

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