



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang
Consumers Association of Penang
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Press Statement

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Proposed heavier punishment is good, but more is still needed to stop polluters

As far back as 2019, the Consumer's Association of Penang (CAP) has been calling on the government to amend the law to ensure that culprits who pollute our water sources be punished in the harshest ways possible. As such we commend the decision and efforts by the Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry to get the Water Industry Act 2006 amended to include a heavier punishment for polluters.

The current punishment of an RM100,000.00 fine and/or a one-year jail term is insufficient to be a deterrent. The new amendment will introduce a maximum fine of RM 10mil and/or a jail term of 15 years is more appropriate.

Nevertheless, this proposed amendment is not enough to stop the water pollution that is happening. Last year alone there were numerous reports about the horrible condition of many of our natural water sources (rivers and lakes), because of the rampant pollution happening. Some examples of these include:

- Pig waste dumped into the Sungai Rambai and Tanjung Sepat, polluting the water and turning it into a black sludge.
- Uncontrolled logging at Tasik Kenyir caused the lake water to turn murky and muddy with little bits of wood floating in the water.
- Uncontrolled mining at Tasik Biru Ibam caused the lake water to be murky and cloudy.
- Errant factories that release effluent into Sungai Kabul.
- People throwing their everyday garbage into rivers and lakes in Johor Bahru.
- Tasik Chini's status as part of the UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) came into question because of the uncontrolled mining, logging and forest clearing for palm tree plantation, causing severe damage to the lake and the surrounding flora and fauna.

It is apparent that we need more than heavier fines and longer jail sentences to stop the pollution to our natural water sources from happening.

CAP asks that the government also shut down errant factories permanently and revoke the license of companies that damage the environment with their activities. Furthermore, factories should not be permitted to set up their operations close to the rivers or any other water source. The government must also ensure that there is adequate manpower and competent staff to deal with enforcing the law.

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