

Do more to protect water resource

Penang lists conditions in support of Kedah's request for funds to conserve rainforests

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THE Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has welcomed Kedah's move to ask RM100mil from the Federal Government to conserve 160,000ha of rainforests in Ulu Muda.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the funds would preserve Ulu Muda as a Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) water catchment area totally and in perpetuity.

He, however, said the Federal Government should only pay the amount in accordance with three key conditions including getting Kedah to gazette the rainforests as 'Water Catchment Forests' under Section 10A (1) of the National Forestry Act.

"Secondly, Kedah must agree to physically conserve and protect Ulu Muda in perpetuity as an NCER Water Catchment Area.

"Lastly, Kedah must agree to terminate all existing logging concessions in Ulu Muda and stop the Kedah Forestry Department from issuing new logging concessions there.

"Logging must be completely banned in Ulu Muda in perpetuity," he said in a statement.

Ulu Muda is the largest water catchment area in the NCER with 4.2 million people living in Perlis, Kedah and Penang highly dependent on the raw water that comes from the site.

About 70% of Perlis' raw water and 96% of Kedah's raw water originate from Ulu Muda.

More than 80% of the raw water that PBAPP abstracts from



An aerial view of Ulu Muda Lake in Kedah with the dam (at bottom right of picture). – Filepic

Sungai Muda daily, at the Lahar Tiang intake station in Penang, originates from Ulu Muda.

"All socio-economic activities in these three NCER states, which are highly dependent on the raw water from Ulu Muda, contributed RM150.5bil to the national GDP in 2018.

"Most of the padi farmers in Kedah, known as the 'Ricebowl of Malaysia', are dependent on raw water from Ulu Muda for irrigation purposes.

"The success of NCER economic transformation projects will

depend on the availability of raw water from Ulu Muda," he said.

The projects include those in the Chuping Valley Industrial Area, Superfruits Nucleus Farm and Perlis Inland Port in Perlis; Kedah Rubber City, Kedah Science and Technology Park, Sidam Logistics Aerospace and Manufacturing, Petro-chemical Industrial Park, Kulim Hi-Tech Park, Special Border Economic Zone at Bukit Kayu Hitam, Pulau Bunting Development and Kulim International Airport in Kedah

plus Penang Port and Penang Airport expansion in Penang.

"In this context, Ulu Muda is an irreplaceable and indispensable NCER socio-economic resource.

"The repercussions of logging in Ulu Muda extend beyond environmental destruction."

On Aug 27, Kedah Menteri Besar Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor was quoted as saying that Kedah had negotiated with the Natural Resources and Water Ministry to seek RM100mil compensation for conserving Ulu Muda as a water catchment area.

“The Federal Government should only pay the amount in accordance with Kedah agreeing to protect Ulu Muda in perpetuity.

Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa