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PRESS STATEMENT

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CEO, PBA Holdings Bhd and PBAPP

STEP UP SURVEILLANCE AND PROTECTION OF SUNGAI MUDA

- **PBAPP fully supports the National Water Services Commission's (SPAN's) proposal to protect Sungai Muda as a "strategic river" to prevent pollution and contamination.**
- **Sungai Muda is the primary raw water resource for Penang and Kedah. It must be monitored, protected and conserved to sustain water supply security for millions of people and thousands of businesses in the two states.**

PENANG, Wednesday, 5.2.2020: Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) fully supports the National Water Services Commission's (SPAN's) proposal to protect Sungai Muda as a "strategic river".

SPAN Chairman YB Charles Santiago's idea to establish a 30-metre buffer zone along the 203 km length of the river is a good start.

More importantly, the following 5 key actions must be instituted:

- Regular river and river bank patrols;
- Periodic drone surveillance;
- Posting of warning signages;
- Educating and informing river bank land owners; and
- Strict enforcement of river protection regulations and laws.

We agree with SPAN that the protection of Sungai Muda must be seriously regarded as a public health and water supply security issue.

The discovery of a second illegal waste dump site along the banks of Sungai Muda should serve as an alarm for the relevant authorities to take action now.

According to news reports, a former 1.21 hectare (3 acre) sand mining pool in Kampung Belida in Kuala Ketil, Kedah, is now filled with rubbish. The mining pool is reported to be close to the banks of Sungai Muda.

In July last year, it was reported that the Kedah State Government had sealed off a 2-hectare illegal dump site at Sidam Kiri after it was found to be a dumping ground for e-waste originating from all over the world.

Illegal dump sites along the banks of Sungai Muda represent direct and dangerous threats to water supply in Penang and southern Kedah.

Dire consequences of pollution or contamination

Sungai Muda is the primary raw water resource for Penang and southern Kedah.

More than 80% of Penang's raw water is abstracted from Sungai Muda daily. The raw water is then treated at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (Sungai Dua WTP) and distributed to water consumers in Seberang Prai and Penang Island.

If the raw water from Sungai Muda is found to be polluted or contaminated by waste seepage, there will be dire consequences.

PBAPP will be compelled to stop raw water abstraction from Sungai Muda, in the interests of protecting public health. However, this emergency measure will cause immediate and widespread water supply interruptions throughout Penang because the Sungai Dua WTP will then not have sufficient raw water to treat.

The scenario would be the same for all areas located in the southern Kedah. All in all, millions of people and businesses will have no water supply.

As such, all illegal dump sites along Sungai Muda must be shut down and a concerted effort must be taken to prevent illegal waste dumping along the river banks at all costs.

PBAPP Testing Water Quality Daily

It should be noted that as the water supply operator that serves Penang, PBAPP is not empowered to take any action in Kedah.

However, we are monitoring the quality of the raw water that is abstracted from Sungai Muda at our Lahar Tiang Intake in Penang, on a daily basis. Our Central Laboratory in the Sungai Dua WTP is on high alert, and will continue to sample and test the raw water that comes into the plant every day.

To date, the quality of treated water produced by the Sungai Dua WTP has been found to be clean and safe. PBAPP treated water continues to comply to the parameters set by the Ministry of Health under its Quality Assurance Programme (QAP).

Moreover, PBAPP is commissioning independent tests on “heavy metals” in view of the threat of contamination from the Kampung Belida illegal dump site. If there is any abnormality, we will make a public announcement.

Thank You.

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