



## Stop work at Macallum seafront project done “voluntarily”

Admin

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THE excavation and land reclamation works at the Macallum seafront area in George Town are related to the third Penang Submarine Pipeline Project, and not sand mining.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa brushed aside online reports that the Marine Police had immediately stopped “sand mining works” at Weld Quay or Jelutong.

While admitting that the works at the project had stopped since March 30, he said Wira Syukur (M) Sdn Bhd (WSSB), the contractor for the project, did so on a “voluntary” basis.

“PBAPP (the project owner) and WSSB have not received any official stop work order from any authority,” Jaseni told a press conference at Komtar today. With him was Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

Jaseni said it was PBAPP which instructed WSSB to voluntarily stop all excavation and land reclamation works until WSSB obtains the permit from the Penang State Lands and Mines Office (PTG).

This came about after WSSB informed PBAPP that they received a letter from PTG dated March 29, 2019, notifying them to apply for a “Permit 4B for the Removal of Sea Sand from Penang.”

On Dec 18, 2012, the state Department of Environment (DoE) issued a conditional approval for the “Design and Construction of Submarine Pipelines from Butterworth to Penang”.

“PBAPP is investing RM125 million in the project to deliver an additional 315 million litres of water per day (MLD) to the island. It is for the benefit of the state of Penang and its people, in view of growing water demand,” Jaseni added.



### **29.3.2019: 3rd Penang Submarine Pipeline Project (Macallum seafront worksite).**

He said Phases One and Two of the project, with regard to the laying of new pipelines on land in Butterworth and Penang, have been completed.

Phase Three involves the laying of twin 1,200mm undersea pipelines across a 3.2km stretch of the channel between Butterworth and Penang.

“Seabed excavation works are necessary to dig a 3.2km trench across the channel to “encase” the twin submarine pipelines below the seabed. This measure will protect the pipelines and prevent the pipelines from floating upwards.

“It is not possible to properly lay 3.2km of 1,200mm twin submarine pipelines in the sea without stirring up sand or disturbing the seabed.

“The key is to manage the environmental impact and minimise adverse effects.”

This is Penang’s third submarine pipeline project. Two other submarine pipelines (that are in operation today) have been successfully laid across the same channel, using the same method, without incurring widespread environmental damage in 1973 and 1995 respectively.

Jaseni explained that part of the excavated material would be used to reclaim land at the Macallum seafront. This reclaimed land will house the landing point of the pipelines onto the island, as well as an operation base for the project after it is commissioned.

“When the pipe laying works are completed, the reclaimed land will be surrendered to the Penang State Government. In other words, all the land reclaimed for this project will eventually become state-owned land.

“The remainder of the excavated material will be disposed at a sea-fill site approved by DoE and the Northern Region Marine Department.

“So, this is not a sand mining project. It is a public service water supply management project that has been approved by the Penang State Government.”

Following allegations that “sand mining in Weld Quay” had affected fishermen’s catches, DoE personnel visited the Macallum worksite on March 29.

“WSSB has been complying with DoE’s conditions for work including submission of independent monthly “Environmental Monitoring Reports”.

“These reports contain tests results on seawater samples taken at three depths in a location 150 meters away from the worksite. The report for March 2019 showed minimal variations in key seawater quality parameters when compared to the baseline report submitted in November 2018.

“As such, it is highly unlikely that the works could have affected fishing in areas that are many kilometres away, such as Batu Uban, Teluk Bahang and Balik Pulau,” Jaseni said.

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