

PBAPP supports Kedah's claim of RM100 mln to conserve Ulu Muda Forest Reserve



GEORGE TOWN, Aug 28 -- Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) supports Kedah's claim of RM100 million from the federal government to fully conserve the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve permanently.

Its chief executive officer, Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said PBAPP also welcomed the Kedah state government's readiness to conserve 160,000 hectares of the forest as a water catchment area for the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER).

"The federal government must pay the claim of RM100 million to Kedah, based on three main conditions including Kedah agreeing to gazette (Ulu Muda), and categorising and legally protecting the 16,000 hectares of rainforest in Ulu Muda as water catchment forest under Section 10A (1) of the National Forestry Act 1984.

"Kedah is to agree to conserve and protect Ulu Muda permanently and to stop all existing logging concessions and prevent the Kedah Forestry Department from issuing new logging concessions in Ulu Muda," he said in a statement here today.

Jaseni said all logging activities should be stopped immediately and a permanent logging ban imposed in Ulu Muda.

"The main rationale for conserving Ulu Muda is because the area is the NCER's largest water catchment area that provides raw water to three states, namely Perlis, Kedah and Penang.

"Ulu Muda provides about 70 per cent of raw water to Perlis, 96 per cent in Kedah and more than 80 per cent to Penang, benefiting 4.2 million people," he added.

All business and socio-economic activities in the three NCER states contributed RM150.5 billion to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018, he said.

Jaseni said the success of the NCER economic transformation project also depended on the availability of sufficient raw water from Ulu Muda.

"The impact of logging in Ulu Muda is beyond environmental destruction. Without sufficient raw water from Ulu Muda, taps will run dry in Perlis, Kedah and Penang, especially when we are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and trying to recover from it.

"Therefore, the federal government should take this opportunity to compensate Kedah and work with Kedah to ensure the state protects Ulu Muda for the benefit of the NCER and its people totally and in perpetuity," he added.