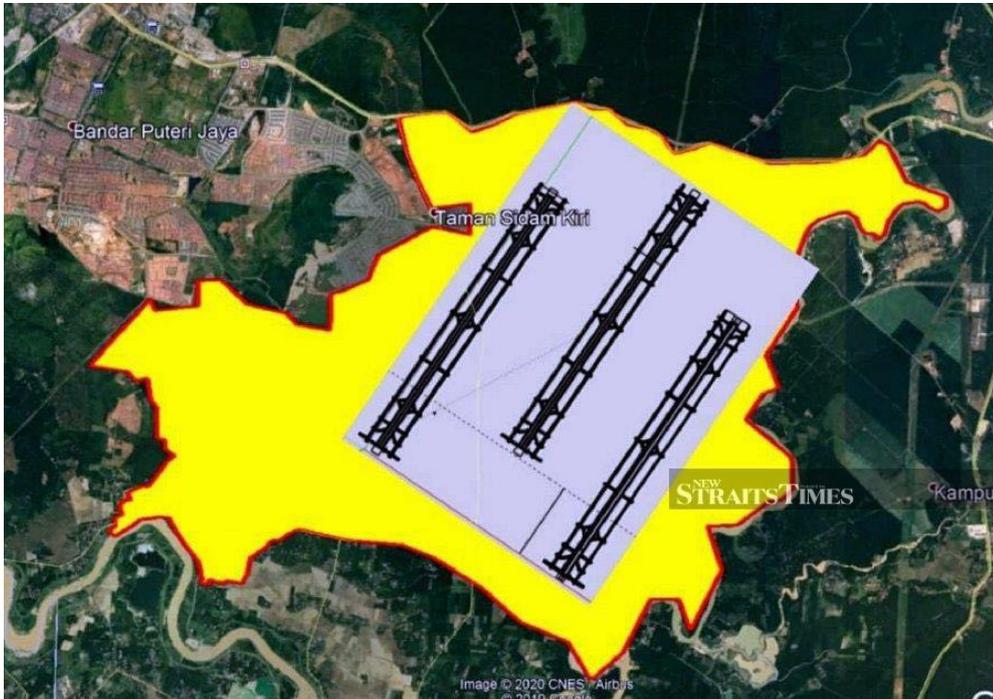


# Kulim airport wastewater discharge into Sg Muda risks well-being, livelihood of 1.78m Penangites

By **Audrey Dermawan** - August 30, 2021 @ 5:44pm



*The proposed discharge of wastewater from the Kulim International Airport (KXP) project into Sungai Muda is unacceptable, the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) said today. - NSTP/ AMRAN HAMID*

GEORGE TOWN: The proposed discharge of wastewater from the Kulim International Airport (KXP) project into Sungai Muda is unacceptable, the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) said today.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report for the KXP project and Aerotropolis showed plans for a sewage treatment plant that would discharge wastewater into Sungai Muda, the primary raw water resource for Penang and south Kedah, 6km upstream of the Lahar Tiang Intake.

He said the planned discharge of wastewater into Sungai Muda presented an unacceptable scenario for Penang and PBAPP.

PBAPP, he said, abstracted raw water from Sungai Muda at its Lahar Tiang Intake daily, just 6km downstream of the point where wastewater would be discharged from the KXP project site.

More than 80 per cent of the raw water for Penang's daily need is abstracted from Sungai Muda at the Lahar Tiang Intake in Seberang Prai.

"Since 1973, when the Muda River Water Scheme was commissioned, PBAPP has been carefully monitoring the quality of raw water abstracted from Sungai Muda. Every day, we seek to minimise raw water quality risks, with our customers' safety and good health in mind.

"Raw water abstracted from Sungai Muda is treated using conventional water treatment technologies at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The Sungai Dua WTP treats river water of acceptable quality, within the safety margins designated under the National Drinking Water Quality Assurance Programme set by the Health Ministry.

"It is not equipped to deal with treating wastewater or river water with unknown or high levels of chemical/microbiological contents which may be toxic or hazardous.

"As such, the Federal government must not allow or approve a massive project that discharges wastewater into Penang's primary raw water resource. If anything goes wrong in the KXP project site upstream, water supply services in Penang and south Kedah will be immediately and inevitably compromised. The well-being and good health of the people must be considered as a matter of the highest priority," he said today.

The Department of Environment (DOE), under the Environment and Water Ministry, had published the public consultation documents regarding the KXP EIA report online.

In one of the linked "figures" shared on Google Drive, the planned location of a sewage treatment plant (STP) point is at Sungai Jerong, a tributary of Sungai Muda. This STP point is just 2km away from Sungai Muda.

Jaseni said, in all likelihood, it would discharge wastewater into Sungai Jerong, which would then flow into Sungai Muda.

Downstream of this STP point, he added, were Kedah's three Syarikat Air Darul Aman (SADA) water treatment plant intakes, seven Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) irrigation intakes and Penang's one water treatment plant intake and two DID irrigation intakes.

Jaseni said the water supply threats posed by the KXP project proposal were applicable to both the short-to-medium term construction phase and the long-term operation phase.

"In Penang, PBAPP supplies treated water to 1.776 million people on a daily basis, around the clock.

"As such, any discharge of wastewater into Sungai Muda represents an unacceptable risk to the well-being of 1.78 million people in Penang, as well as for the businesses that contributed an estimated RM94.7 billion to the Malaysian gross development product (GDP) in 2020," he said, adding that the best solution to the issue was the relocation of the KXP project.

"PBAPP recommends to the DOE, Environment and Water Ministry and the federal government that the proposed KXP and 'Aerotropolis' project be relocated to a 'safer location', as far away from Sungai Muda as possible.

"The reasons are simple... the public will not accept planned discharge of wastewater into their raw water resource. It is too risky, very dangerous and intolerably distasteful," he noted, stressing that the proposed airport project could be moved but Sungai Muda, an irreplaceable raw water resource from Penang, could not be relocated.

"The interests and well-being of the people and businesses in Penang must be prioritised above plans for a new airport that may contaminate Sungai Muda," he added.

On Aug 2, the Kedah government signed a joint venture agreement with ECK Group to build KXP.

It was reported that with the signing of an agreement between the ECK Group and Kedah owned company KXP Airportcity Sdn Bhd, KXP might be built by 2026.

The first phase of the airport construction would cost RM6 billion, including the cost of land acquisition. A special purpose vehicle would be formed with ECK Group holding 80 per cent and the balance to be held by KXP Airportcity Sdn Bhd.