

7th February 2018

PRESS STATEMENT

by Dato' Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa,
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PLEASE SHOW EVIDENCE THAT “LOGGING DID NOT CAUSE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT” IN ULU MUDA

- **Logging causes habitat loss for animals and plants; affects soil and hydrological cycles; and may contribute to climate change.**
- **Kedah claims there was “no environmental impact from logging in Ulu Muda” in a report to the NRE Ministry. This report should be made public to substantiate Kedah’s extraordinary claim.**

PENANG, Wednesday, 7/2/2018: The Kedah Forestry Department report that shows “logging did not cause any environmental impact in Ulu Muda” should be made public.

On 29/1/2018, NST published a news report quoting a spokesman as saying that the department had completed and submitted a study on the impact of logging in the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve (UMFR) to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE). The spokesman also alleged that the report showed there was no environmental impact from logging.

If this is true, the Kedah report is extraordinary and unusual. The negative impact of logging on the environment has been well documented all over the world.

The ‘Global Forest Atlas’, as published online by the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies states that:

“While logging is important to regional economies and rural communities, if not managed properly, it can contribute to deforestation and forest degradation. Habitat loss is one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, especially in tropical rainforests where over 50% of all of the world’s documented animal and plant species are found.

Logging also directly impacts soil and hydrological cycles, as the reduction in tree cover leads to increases in water runoff and soil erosion.

At the macro level, deforestation by logging results in a reduction of carbon sequestration (trapping) capacity, which in turn contributes to climate change. Deforestation from logging and timber conversion in the tropics accounts for approximately 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually.” <https://globalforestatlas.yale.edu/forest-use-logging/logging>

As such, the Kedah Forestry Department should present the following as evidence to prove its claim that logging has no impact on the UMFR as a water catchment area:

- a. Watershed study findings;
- b. Rainfall/water runoff relationship data;
- c. Water balance table (dry and wet seasons);
- d. Hydrological models;
- e. Soil erosion and sedimentation data; and
- f. A historical comparison of the quality of raw water from rivers within the UMFR.

MAKE PUBLIC THE KEDAH REPORT

Since Kedah has publicly claimed that logging is harmless, PBAPP would like to request for the NRE Ministry to publicise the scientific data from the Kedah report, in view of the following key considerations:

1. The UMFR is the most important water catchment area in the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) for three states – Perlis, Kedah and Penang. Logging this NCER water catchment area has a direct impact on raw water availability for about 4.09 million people.
2. Tens of thousands of businesses, including multinational corporations and international 5-star hotels that operate in Perlis, Kedah and Penang, are also dependent on the UMFR water catchment area.
3. In the past 12 months, spokespersons from the following organisations have publicly expressed concern about logging in the UMFR:
 - Forum Air Malaysia,
 - PBAPP,
 - Penang Institute,



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- Penang State Government,
 - PEKA (Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam Malaysia),
 - Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM),
 - Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM),
 - Water Watch Penang, and
 - WWF-Malaysia.
4. On the mass media front, *Kosmo!* and *The Star* have published in-depth exposés related to logging in the UMFR in 2018, 2017 and 2016; and news reports on logging in the UMFR have been published in all major newspapers in the country, as well as in various online news portals.
5. Key points that have been raised to describe the threat and impact of logging in UMFR include:
- Critical raw water levels recorded at the Beris Dam and Muda Dam during the Super El Niño crisis in 2016.
 - The murkiness of rivers in the UMFR that have affected local fishing catches and eco-tourism.
 - The high turbidity of water (like *teh tarik*) from Sungai Muda.
 - A 15km logging trail near Sik, along the perimeter of the Muda Dam, found in 2016.
 - Suspected reduction of the Muda Dam's water catchment area by 87.3%, from 98,400 hectares (ha) in 1969 to 12,484 ha in 2017.
 - Logging has been carried out in the UMFR since 2008.
 - Kedah approved logging of a total of 46,264 ha of forests in the period 2009 – 2014, according to the Attorney-General's Report 2014.
 - Logging is being carried out 50km inside the UMFR in 2018.
 - Logging is being carried out less than 50 metres from Sungai Labua which flows into the Muda Dam.
 - 1,200 ha of forests, from Kuala Teliang to Jeram Keris, have been marked as "new logging areas" in 2018.
 - Logging threatens 100 species of indigenous mammals and 50 species of reptiles living in the UMFR.
6. Videos, photos and satellite images that show the environmental impact of logging in the UMFR have been posted on the Internet for public viewing.

The latest video, published by *Kosmo! Online* on 22/1/2018, may be viewed via the following link:

<http://www.kosmo.com.my/tv/kesan-pembalakan-hutan-di-ulu-muda-sik-kedah-1.595068>

LOGGING IN A WATER CATCHMENT IS THE ISSUE

PBAPP and other concerned organisations have called for a complete and immediate ban of all logging in the UMFR because logging a water catchment area inevitably threatens raw water availability and quality.

Logging is not only threatening the forest environment and biodiversity in the UMFR. It also threatens water supply for 4.09 million people in the NCER.

PBAPP's stand is: *If you claim that logging did not cause any environmental impact in the UMFR, please show us the evidence and relevant scientific data to prove your claim.*

Thank You.

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