



30.7.2019

PRESS STATEMENT

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ILLEGAL RIVERSIDE WASTE DUMPING IN KEDAH: PBAPP WILL VERIFY QUALITY OF POTABLE WATER SUPPLIED IN PENANG

- **The State Governments of Kedah and Penang must check if there is more than one illegal dump site along the 203km length of Sungai Muda.**
- **A 30-metre reserve should be maintained along the banks of Sungai Muda to protect water supply in Kedah and Penang.**
- **PBAPP will verify if quality of potable water in Penang is affected by illegal waste dumping.**

PENANG, Tuesday, 30.7.2019: Samples of raw water from Sungai Muda will be collected at the Lahar Tiang Intake for independent laboratory testing, following reports of illegal riverside dumping at a riverbank along Sungai Muda in Kedah.

In 2018, the test results on 3,182 samples of treated water (collected at 213 sampling points throughout Penang) showed that the potable water supplied by PBAPP was clean and safe.

Nevertheless, we will now collect and send water samples for independent testing. We want to verify that the illegal waste dumping activities near Sungai Muda in Kedah have not compromised raw water quality at the Lahar Tiang Intake in Penang.

Please check if there is more than one illegal dump site

On 28.7.2019, various mass media reported that the Kedah State Government had shut down an illegal 1.8-hectare (ha.) waste dump in Kampung Kemumbang in Sidam Kiri, Sungai Petani.

The site is actually 22.8km upstream of the Lahar Tiang Intake. Mass media reports stated that waste found on the site included electronic waste and chemicals.

The shutting down and proposed clearing of an illegal riverside dump site is good. However, PBAPP recommends the following actions to ensure that water supply for 2.16 million people in Kedah and 1.77 million in Penang is not threatened by illegal dumping and river pollution, now and in the future:

1. Check if there is more than one illegal dumping site along the riverbanks of Sungai Muda. The total length of Sungai Muda, which flows through Kedah and Penang, is about 203km.
2. Ensure that all landowners maintain a 30-metre riverbank reserve along Sungai Muda to minimise the risks of mishaps, such as chemical spillages and accidental pollution.
3. Deploy law enforcement personnel to patrol 24/7 the river and riverbank areas to detect and deter illegal activities that threaten the river's water quality.
4. Evaluate all socioeconomic activities along the riverbank to ascertain the risk levels for river pollution, with a view to enact laws to protect the river, and consequently, water supply in Kedah and Penang.

PBAPP abstracts more than 80% of Penang's raw water from Sungai Muda daily and SADA abstracts 100% to supply Southern Kedah. As such, Penang is highly dependent on this river as a raw water resource.

It is shocking to read about the illegal dumping of electronic and chemical waste upstream from Penang's primary raw water intake in Lahar Tiang.



Sungai Muda is a major raw water resource that is shared by Kedah and Penang. In fact, the middle of this river defines part of the boundaries of the two states.

However, there are existing laws under the purview of Jabatan Pengairan dan Saliran (JPS), Department of Environment (DOE) and Local Councils to prevent these illegal activities.

As such, we appeal to the Kedah State Government, the Penang State Government and the relevant Federal Agencies and Ministries to take the necessary preventive actions.

This incident should be regarded as a “wake-up” call for the authorities to take proper actions, immediately and conclusively. At all costs, we must prevent and avoid mishaps like the Sungai Selangor incident that affected millions of water consumers earlier this month.

Thank You.

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