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Press Statement
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KEDAH SHOULD SEEK FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PROTECTION OF ULU MUDA CATCHMENTS

PENANG, Tuesday, 24/03/2015: Kedah should seek Federal funds for the protection of the Greater Ulu Muda catchments for the benefit of 3.8 million people living in Kedah, Penang and Perlis.

Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) supports the protection of the Greater Ulu Muda catchments and we will definitely support any bid from Kedah to seek Federal funds or grants to protect these areas in the interests of continuous good water supply in both states, as well as in southern Perlis.

After all, in the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015), under the heading of *'Building an Environment that Enhances the Quality of Life'*, the Federal Government had stated that it will "undertake initiatives to encourage states to gazette forests, especially the water catchment areas, as protected areas."

As such, PBAPP is puzzled as to why Kedah seems afraid or hesitant to seek federal funds for this worthy initiative that will also preserve the natural rainforest heritage in the northern region.

In an English daily report published on 23 March 2015, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir was quoted as saying: *"Penang had asked Kedah not to fell timber in water catchment areas and Penang is sourcing raw water from the river for free. As such, Penang should consider our proposal to absorb part of the costs, similar to the concept of developed nations who owe developing nations carbon credits..."*

Once again, PBAPP would like to reiterate the following facts:

1. Penang and Kedah are not "nations." We are neighbouring states in the same nation called Malaysia.

Both Penang and Kedah do pay federal taxes to the Federal Government. We will be paying more taxes in the form of GST from 1st April 2015.

As such, what is wrong with asking the Federal Government to fund the conservation of the Ulu Muda catchments that benefit three states, which happen to be parts of the same nation?

2. The Muda River does not “belong” to Kedah. This river serves as a boundary between Penang and Kedah. Penang draws raw water from the river from its side of the border at its own cost. The raw water from the river does not “accidentally” flow into Penang’s Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant. The raw water needs to be pumped from the Lahar Tiang Intake through the Sungai Dua Canal. The related costs of pumping and maintenance costs are not “free.”
3. Gazetting the Greater Ulu Muda forestlands as water catchments will be an environmental-friendly initiative that will benefit 3.8 million people in Kedah, Penang and Perlis. Gazetting will protect an important natural heritage area in the northern region, ensure the bio-diversity of pristine rainforests and protect the natural habitats of thousands of species of animals and plants.

As such, if Kedah can successfully secure Federal gazetting of the Greater Ulu Muda area, Kedah stands to gain much in terms of potential eco-tourism revenue. Eco-tourism is more sustainable and environment-friendly than felling trees.

4. Perhaps the best reason for Kedah to seek Federal funding is simply that the Federal Government has the funds, and we are in the same country.

Thank You.

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