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PRESS STATEMENT

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LOGGING IN THE ULU MUDA FOREST RESERVE MUST BE STOPPED, IMMEDIATELY AND TOTALLY.

- **Why is logging allowed in a “forest reserve”?**
- **Kedah must reveal the truth about logging since 2008.**
- **Protect and conserve the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve as a “NCER Raw Water Catchment Area” now.**

PENANG, Wednesday, 24/1/2018: Logging in Kedah's Ulu Muda Forest Reserve (UMFR) must be stopped immediately and totally, for the following reasons:

1. There should be no logging in a “forest reserve”. One of the fundamental reasons for declaring an area as a forest reserve is to prevent it from being destroyed by logging.
2. Besides “catching rain water” for three key dams in Kedah (the Ahning Dam, Muda Dam and Pedu Dam), the UMFR is also a water catchment area for Sungai Muda, Penang's primary raw water resource. Essentially, about 4.09 million people in Perlis, Kedah and Penang are dependent on the UMFR as a water catchment area. If more trees are cut down in this forest reserve, there will come a time when the taps will run dry... and the people and businesses in our 3 states will suffer.
3. Logging clears forestlands to expose soil and debris. When it rains, the soil and debris is washed down into dams and rivers. This causes sedimentation or the depositing of soil and debris in dams and rivers. Sedimentation reduces dam storage capacities and affects river flow. It also affects the quality of the raw water. Today, the raw water that Penang draws from Sungai Muda already looks like “teh tarik”, and Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) must treat the water carefully to ensure that it is safe for consumption.

Shocking News Reports

Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam Malaysia (PEKA) and *Kosmo!* have done a good job in uncovering the latest shocking facts about logging in the UMFR, such as:

- a. Logging has been carried out there since 2008.
- b. Logging is being carried out 50 kilometers inside the forest reserve.
- c. 1,200 hectares have been marked as “new logging areas”.
- d. Logging has affected the quality of the water in the rivers within the forest reserve.

Please note that these are independent findings by a non-government organisation (NGO) and a newspaper. The findings raise several important questions:

- Why is logging allowed, and licensed, in a “forest reserve”?
- How many hectares of the UMFR have been logged since 2008?
- How many more hectares will be logged in 2018?
- Why is the Kedah State Government unaware of the extent of logging in the UMFR?
- Who is responsible for monitoring the status or condition of the UMFR as a water catchment area?

It is time for Kedah to publicly tell the truth about logging in the UMFR.

4.09 million people and tens of thousands of businesses operating in 3 states deserve to know what is going in there. The Federal Government needs to know what are the real facts and figures before making urgent decisions regarding Ulu Muda.

Federal Government Intervention

Meanwhile, the Kedah State Government is continuing to focus on what it terms as “illegal logging” in the UMFR.

The point is that NO LOGGING should be allowed in the UMFR because it functions as the most important water catchment area in the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER).

As such, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) and/or the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) must take on the responsibility to conserve the UMFR as a “NCER Water Catchment Area”.

Without Federal Government intervention, Kedah will not stop logging in the UMFR because it “earns” millions of ringgit annually from “forest premiums” charged to logging companies.

For many years now, PBAPP and Penang have pointed out that the Federal Government should compensate Kedah to totally ban logging in Ulu Muda.

With Federal compensation, Kedah must pass a law to gazette the UMFR as a protected water catchment area. The Federal Government and Kedah must then work together to enforce the law to conserve UMFR as a NCER resource.

Time is running out for the UMFR, and also for the NCER. Actions must be taken now before it is too late.

Thank You.

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