

11.7.2019

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

by Dato' Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa,  
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## **ONLY 16% OF ULU MUDA GAZETTED AS “WATER CATCHMENT FORESTS”**

- **Kedah gazetted 106,418 hectares of rainforests in Ulu Muda as “Permanent Reserve Forests” (*Hutan Simpanan Kekal*) in May 2018.**
- **However, only 17,025 hectares have been gazetted as “Water Catchment Forests” (*Hutan Tadahan Air*).**

PENANG, Thursday, 11.7.2019: Only 16% of 106,418 hectares of “Permanent Reserve Forests” in Ulu Muda, Kedah, have been gazetted as “Water Catchment Forests”.

On 1.7.2019, YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow (who serves as the Chief Minister of Penang and Member of Parliament for Tanjong) raised a question in Parliament regarding the status of efforts to gazette Ulu Muda, following an earlier announcement that Kedah had banned logging in its rainforests.

According to a reply from the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources (KATS), 106,418 hectares (ha.) of rainforests in Ulu Muda had been gazetted as “Permanent Reserve Forests” (*Hutan Simpanan Kekal*) by Kedah state authorities, under Section 7 of the National Forestry Act 1984 (NFA)\*.

This gazette was affected through the Kedah State Gazette 341, dated 10.5.2018.

KATS also stated that 17,025 ha. (16%) of Ulu Muda has been gazetted as “Water Catchment Forests” under Section 10 (1) of the NFA.

On 4.9.2018 and 5.9.2018, KATS was quoted by the mass media as thanking the Kedah State Government for banning logging activities in Ulu Muda.

However, this 1.7.2019 Parliamentary reply indicates that **84% of the rainforests in Ulu Muda are NOT protected as water catchment areas** for the benefit of 4.2 million people living in Perlis, Kedah and Penang.

### NFA has allowances for “timber production”

Kindly note that the NFA has allowances for timber production. Section 10(1) states that:

“The (State Forestry) Director, with the approval of the State Authority, shall by notification in the *Gazette*, classify every permanent reserve forest under one or more of the following classifications which shall be descriptive of the purpose or purposes for which the land is being or intended to be used:

- (a) **timber production forest under sustained yield;**
- (b) soil protection forest;
- (c) soil reclamation forest;
- (d) flood control forest;
- (e) water catchment forest;
- (f) forest sanctuary for wildlife;
- (g) virgin jungle reserve forest;
- (h) amenity forest;
- (i) education forest;
- (j) research forest;
- (k) forest for federal purposes.”

What is the classification for the remaining 84%?

PBAPP would like to raise the following key questions:

1. Why did Kedah classify only 16% or 17,025 ha. of the Ulu Muda “Permanent Reserve Forests” as “Water Catchment Forests” under the NFA?

2. What is the NFA classification for the remaining 84% of “Permanent Reserve Forests” in Ulu Muda totaling 89,393 ha.? (106,418 ha. – 17,025 ha. = 89,393 ha.)
3. Has Kedah classified any areas in Ulu Muda as “Timber Production Forests” under the NFA? If so, how has Kedah “banned logging” in Ulu Muda?
4. According to online posts by the Friends of Ulu Muda II\*\* and WWF-Malaysia\*\*\*, the “Ulu Muda Forest” covers a total area of about 160,000 ha. According to KATS, Kedah gazetted 106,418 ha. of Ulu Muda as “Permanent Reserve Forests”, as at 1.7.2019.

What is the status of the other 53,582 ha.? (160,000 ha. – 106,418 ha. = 53,582 ha.)

#### Classify Ulu Muda as a “forest for federal purposes”

Perlis, Kedah and Penang are highly dependent on Ulu Muda as a regional water catchment area.

Let there be no doubt that any “timber production” in Ulu Muda will adversely affect water supply services, not only in Kedah, but in three Malaysian states.

The 1.7.2019 parliamentary disclosure stresses the importance of properly defining the status of Ulu Muda and protecting it effectively, with the following considerations in mind:

- Ulu Muda is a “Northern Region Water Catchment Area”, and not merely “Permanent Reserve Forests” in Kedah.
- The conservation of Ulu Muda as a regional water catchment area should be prioritised as a **critical raw water management issue, and not a forestry issue.**
- The status of Ulu Muda has a direct bearing on water supply sustainability for three states. As such, Ulu Muda must be regarded as “national asset” that requires care and protection by the Federal Government.

- The rainforests in Ulu Muda should be classified as “Forests for Federal Purposes” under the Section 10(1) of the NFA. The Federal Government must then ensure that Ulu Muda is not destroyed.
- In order to sustainably conserve Ulu Muda legally, physically and in perpetuity, the Federal Government must compensate Kedah in a fair manner.
- Ulu Muda must be conserved properly, totally and immediately, not only for the birds and the trees, but for the well-being of 4.2 million Malaysians, their children and grandchildren.

Thank You.

\* [https://www.forestry.gov.my/images/JPSM/wargaperhutanan/AktaAPN\\_en.pdf](https://www.forestry.gov.my/images/JPSM/wargaperhutanan/AktaAPN_en.pdf)

\*\* <http://www.mengo.org/resources/articles/16-joint-statement-by-the-friends-of-ulu-muda-ii-on-the-proposed-logging-at-ulu-muda>

\*\*\* [http://www.wwf.org.my/about\\_wwf/what\\_we\\_do/forests\\_main/forest\\_protect/protect\\_projects/ulu\\_muda/](http://www.wwf.org.my/about_wwf/what_we_do/forests_main/forest_protect/protect_projects/ulu_muda/)

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