

## **Environmentalists call for logging moratorium**

THE government should not only put a suspension on logging, but also review other environmental policies in response and preparation to climate change.

According to Project Ocean Hope co-founder and environmental activist Mogesh Sababathy, it is not too late on climate change issues as we do have many good environmental policies.

Malaysia needs to re-look into and revamp and imposing the logging moratorium is one of them.

“The moratorium is definitely something that the government has to consider since we have been speeding towards the wrong direction all this while.

“All this while, we’ve just been selfish for the country’s economy but when you look at the consequences, we really have to do something,” he told The Malaysian Reserve (TMR).

“This moratorium has to be considered by the government because it’s time they give more attention to the logging zones.

“We are not against logging activity, because we do need that part of the industry and as long as it is done sustainably,” he added.

Last month, the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia’s has come out with a petition for the government to put a stop to logging.

This is in response to the recent floods that hit Malaysia and logging is one of the factors that have caused them and it sparked an outcry of rage when the Pahang State Forestry Department declared that there were no logging activities and even stressed that the pile of logs was caused by water.

In total, the **Department of Statistics** said Malaysia lost up to RM6.1 billion due to floods last year. According to the report, the total loss of living quarters in the affected states was recorded at RM1.6 billion, vehicles (RM1 billion), manufacturing (RM0.9 billion), business premises (RM0.5 billion), agriculture (RM90.6 million), and public assets and infrastructure (RM2 billion).

Temerloh in Pahang recorded the highest vehicle damage losses, amounting to RM44.8 million, followed by Kuantan (RM23.8 million) and Bentong (RM4.2 million). Jelebu recorded the highest losses for Negri Sembilan with RM5.2 million, followed by Port Dickson (RM4.6 million) and Seremban (RM3.7 million).

Mogesh said one of the ways to practice sustainable logging is to replant the trees which have been chopped down and improve the enforcement from now on.

“It’s important that we give enough time for both the logging companies and also the government to revisit the policies.

“I feel like the policies are good enough, the problem lies in implementation protocols,” he said.

“Another problem now is that we’ve been seeing a lot of statements from the policymakers, from the authorities, that they do not believe in climate change.

“When they speak, it is as if climate change doesn’t exist and neglect all these issues happening,” added Mogesh.

Forest protection campaign MyHutan advises that we should be looking at a longer-term and permanent solution such as the Ecological Fiscal Transfer.

This is where the federal government compensates state governments for preserving their natural resources.

The moratorium on legal logging is still useful as it provides a natural form of protection against intense and prolonged rainfall.

“Another long-term solution to preventing future logging is stopping land conversion.

“As long as authorities can change the status of a land from forest reserves to owned lands, then nothing can be done,” MyHutan told TMR.

Imposing a moratorium would not prevent more intense rainfall as they require resiliency to withstand this phenomenon.

However, it would be able to provide some sort of a shielding effect as it slows the water runoff.

“In addition, what needs to be taken note of is that moratoria only apply-to-date, which means that any logging licence approved prior to the moratorium date will and can continue,” it added.

What should be done instead is that any logging licence approved prior to the moratorium date will and can continue.

“Where it was undeniable that coordination and ownership in addressing the crisis could have been markedly better, Malaysia is not too late.

“The devastation caused by the floods should serve as a critical reminder how destruction brought about by the effects of climate change is of immense financial costs,” it said.

MyHutan warned that if we do not do anything about preventing the impacts of climate change, we would have to pay for the greater consequences.

Malaysia is also long overdue on the National Adaptation Plan which would essentially serve as a roadmap for the country to build resilience against the inevitable effects of climate change.

“On top of that, drainage systems need to be well maintained in ensuring there is no blockage,” it said.

<https://themalaysianreserve.com/2022/02/03/environmentalists-call-for-logging-moratorium/>