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Law: DOE will use allocation for priority areas

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Department of Environment will make use of the 1999 Budget allocation for priority areas.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today he had asked the DOE to identify the areas especially those relating to the protection and conservation of natural resources.

"We give the assurance that we will make the best use of the money. The non-governmental organisations do not have to worry about this.

"There are a lot of things that need to be looked into but we have to give priority to urgent issues," he said.

Law said the programmes and measures would greatly depend on the amount the DOE would be getting from the allocation.

Part of the allocation will also go to other ministries and agencies which have jurisdiction over environmental matters.

Prime Minister and First Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had on Friday proposed an allocation of RM265 million for the environment under the Budget.

He stressed on the need to curb environmental pollution, protect natural resources including forests and catchment areas, and tackle forest fires.

Law described the allocation as very significant considering this year's allocation was only RM142 million.

"The amount shows that the country does not neglect the environment in such a difficult time.

"It shows that we are not neglecting our obligation towards environmental conservation," he said.

This is also in line with the National Economic Recovery Plan which states the importance of environmental protection during the downturn.

Environmentalists have urged the Government to utilise the money for effective programmes.

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