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Law

REPORT OPEN BURNING BY AGENCIES, LAW TELLS DOE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- The Department of Environment (DOE) has been directed to report to the Cabinet any government departments not cooperating in efforts to halt open burning.

The directive was issued by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at yesterday's Cabinet meeting, according to Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding.

Law told reporters today the directive was because of rising cases of open burning particularly in the federal capital.

"Yesterday alone, DOE officers who went on a one-hour helicopter ride around here spotted not less than 20 open burnings and took photographs which I will show to the Cabinet," he said.

Earlier, Law opened a seminar in Subang near here on the manufacturing sector's compliance with environmental management.

The police and the air force had offered their aircraft for use by the department for aerial surveillance of open burning but Law said "we will make the culprits pay for the cost of this operation".

According to Law, the Cabinet had also instructed municipal councils, among other agencies, to mobilise their units to curb further act of open burning.

"We are working out a device in which all the government departments and agencies throughout the country can work together with the respective DOE offices in the states to curb this act," he said.

Law also said that efforts to educate small and medium-scale industries (SMIs) on environmental issues would continue.

In his speech, Law said that SMIs tend to "misuse" the environment more than the larger industries due to constraints like low capital investment, low profit margin, lack of skilled management structure.

Recent statistics showed that a large percentage of environmental complaints were against the SMIs, he said but did not gave details.

Law said the government would continue to provide the necessary assistance to the SMIs if they adopt cleaner technologies.

The one-day seminar, organised by the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) was attended by 66 senior company officials in the Klang Valley. -- BERNAMA

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