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## Terengganu orders six companies to stop logging

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Terengganu State Government, reacting to satellite pictures showing indiscriminate land-clearing around Tasik Kenyir, has ordered six companies to stop all logging activities and to immediately move out of their concession areas.

This means the weekly submission to the Cabinet of satellite pictures of environmentally-sensitive areas has finally yielded results.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today Terengganu was the first State to have reacted to the satellite pictures.

The State Government had written to him stating that it had issued notices to six companies to stop logging and to move out of the Tempat Forest Reserve and the forested areas around Tasik Kenyir.

The State, in issuing the order on March 21, had asked the companies to look for a more suitable site.

"I want to congratulate and thank the State Government for its immediate and positive action," Law told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

On Feb 24, Law had submitted to the Cabinet 1996 and 1998 satellite images of Tasik Kenyir which showed land clearing and logging at the western side bordering Kelantan.

Logging tracks were visible on the satellite images. A check with the Forestry Department revealed that logging licences were issued for the area in 1996 and 1998.

Law had said that land clearing and logging around Tasik Kenyir had to be strictly regulated or they would cause irreversible damage to the ecosystem.

He said logging should not be carried out in the area and if it was, extreme care should be taken.

Law had subsequently written to the Terengganu and Kelantan State Governments about the matter. He had also submitted the satellite pictures.

Tasik Kenyir, in Terengganu, is served by a water catchment area consisting mainly of tropical rainforests of about 261,694ha in size.

The southern part of the catchment area is also part of Taman Negara, a protected area.

Tasik Kenyir was created by the Kenyir hydroelectric dam covering 37,000ha. It is one of the largest man-made lakes in the world and a tourist attraction. Law said he hoped other States he had written to would react in the same manner Terengganu did.

Since early this year, Law had written to the Pahang, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Kelantan State Governments about various environmental concerns.

He began doing this after being directed by the Prime Minister to submit to the Cabinet on a regular basis satellite pictures of all environmentally-sensitive areas.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had directed the Malaysian Centre for Remote Sensing to use satellite technology to effectively monitor the country's environmental situation.

Meanwhile, Law said the owner of the SS Sun Vista might be asked to pay for the cost of cleaning up the oil slick caused by the sunken ship.

"We have contacted the Singapore Government-owned Sembawang Shipyard about the cleaning up issue. It has extended its co-operation," he said.

When asked if the ministry would ask the company to pay for the cleaning up, he said: "We will touch on it. The cost will be worked out later. To date, they have been responsive."

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