

Lynas wants to dump wastes on island off Pahang
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Australian company Lynas Corporation, which intends to open its rare earth materials refining plant in Gebeng, near Kuantan, soon, wants radioactive solid wastes from the plant to be dumped on an uninhabited island off the coast of Pahang.

Alternatively, the wastes may be disposed off in an area where there is no development, said Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh, who has been campaigning against the rare earth plant.

NONEThese proposals are contained in Lynas' waste management plans, which were on public display until yesterday, said Fuziah (left), who is a PKR vice-president.

"They say that they have not identified the location of the Permanent Disposal Facility (PDF), but they are considering a few options.

One option is an island off the coast of Pahang that is uninhabited," she said when contacted.

The PDF is intended for the plant's solid waste stream, which is classified as radioactive wastes.

The other two waste streams also contain radioactive materials, but have not been classified as radioactive and Lynas intends to recycle and commercialise these.

However, Fuziah said, the location of the island has not been determined because the idea "is still being considered".

'Radioactive materials can leach into the sea'

azlanVoicing her strong opposition to the proposal, Fauziah yesterday handed over a written submission to the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) in Kuantan.

"This must never be allowed as the materials from the PDF can leach into the sea," her submission states.

"Considering that radionuclides have a half-life of 14 billion years, it is feared that the leachate will harm marine life a few hundred years down the road."

As for the alternative, she told Malaysiakini, "Basically, it will have to be in the jungle. But you don't even know... there will come a day when the future generations want to develop that land".

The government, Fuziah added, should follow the examples of other countries, where waste disposal facilities are the responsibility of the state. This especially so, because Lynas only plans to be in Malaysia for about 20 years.

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