

Guan Eng: Can we trust Tiong Lai's word on Lynas?

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DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng has challenged the credibility of two committees headed by Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai to monitor the Lynas Advanced Material Plant (Lamp).

In a statement today, Lim said Liow had once denied claims that the police had fired tear gas and water cannons into the Tung Shin Hospital during the Bersih 2.0 rally last year, but an official probe found otherwise.

Lim said this incident that exposed Liow's blunder showed he lacked authority, knowledge and professionalism.

Now that Liow claims that his two committees would monitor Lamp's compliance with a two-year temporary operating licence (TOL), Lim questioned if the health minister had the know-how to do so.

"Relying on the credibility and professionalism of Liow to monitor the safety of Lamp is no different from trusting Malaysian authorities to safely operate the nuclear reactor when the Kuala Terengganu stadium cannot even be built properly without the roof collapsing.

"Who are the experts in Pahang MCA to monitor Lynas' operation and to determine whether it is safe or not?

"Clearly, MCA and BN are willing to sacrifice people's health for huge profits by the company and other interested parties in allowing the Lynas Rare Earth Plant in Kuantan to commence operations," said Lim.

'Reckless to issue TOL'

Lim pointed out that one of the main contentions against Lamp was that it has yet to meet an vital criteria for the TOL, which is to provide a detailed plan and location of its proposed permanent disposal facility.

The proposal must be submitted to the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) within 10 months after the TOL was issued.

"In other words, the AELB and the regulators themselves did not have a clear radioactive waste disposal proposal from Lynas," said Lim.

Lim said that the fact that the AELB had issued a TOL without even knowing Lynas's waste disposal plans for the toxic slag materials was reckless.

"The public has justifiably zero confidence in the ability of the BN not only to tell the truth but also to monitor the plant safely and professionally," said Lim.

Last Saturday, Liow said Pahang MCA will form a special committee to complement a Health Ministry committee to monitor Lamp's compliance with the TOL conditions.

"We want to ascertain that Lynas abides by the stipulated regulations so that its operations will not adversely affect the safety and health of the people in Kuantan," said Liow, who is also MCA deputy president and Pahang MCA chairperson.

Although the members of the Pahang MCA committee are unknown, Liow said his ministry's committee will include health experts.

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