

Don't abuse people's 'blood and sweat' money, S'wak govt told
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KUCHING – Sarawak DAP chairman Wong Ho Leng (left) has asked the state government to spend their allocation wisely and not to abuse the people's "blood and sweat" money.

Wong, who is also the MP for Sibul, told reporters Tuesday in Kuching that Second Finance Minister Wong Soon Koh has asked the Drainage Irrigation Department to include RM30 million for the dredging of two bottleneck areas in Sibul.

The two areas, Kerto and Sg. Sadit, were chosen out of the five bottleneck areas that was partly to be blamed for the frequent flood in Sibul.

Wong said he felt disgusted by the idea as in Selangor and Penang, the contractors have to pay the state government for the sand they dredge as they could sell it to developers.

Stating that he would not be surprised that the company that got the dredging job would go to the state government cronies, Wong asked Soon Koh to have an open tender on the dredging.

"Give the RM30 million to the Sibul people to spend on education, road upgrading and infrastructure improvement," said Wong.

He said in a motion speech by Soon Koh two years back, it was revealed that the amount of silt coming down from upper reaches of Batang Rejang and its tributaries was estimated to be 60 million metric tonnes per annum.

Based on figures given by Department of Land and Survey, the total volume of sand extracted from Batang Rejang and BatangIgan from year 2002 to March 2008 totaled only 3.085 million metric tonnes.

On the basis of these statistics, it is quite obvious that for any dredging of Batang Rejang to be effective as a flood mitigation measure, it must be very extensive and the process has to be continuous.

Wong said Soon Koh pointed out that the estimate cost to dredge the Batang Rejang e.g one metre from Tg. Manis to Sibul is estimated to be RM1.6 billion. Bintulu Port spend RM14 million annually to dredge just its port area.

"The 30 million is just the initial amount spent. Why spend a staggering amount when you can even earn money out of the sand dredging company in a win-win situation," said Wong.

As the BN is always shouting the slogan of People's First, Performance Now, Wong pointed out that they should start with the open tender to the dredging work.

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