

**Locals say market won't buy Lynas' recycled waste**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 26 — Lynas Corp's plans to recycle waste from its controversial RM2.5 billion rare earth plant in Kuantan into a commercial product will not be accepted by the market, local residents opposed to the refinery said today.

The Stop Lynas Coalition (SLC) and Save Malaysia Stop Lynas (SMSL) groups said in a joint submission to the government that the synthetic gypsum the Australian miner hopes to produce from its waste is the subject of an international safety campaign due to radiation fears.

File photo of the site of the Lynas plant in Gebeng, Kuantan.

"The use of phospho-gypsum plaster-board and plaster cement in buildings as a substitute for natural gypsum may constitute an additional source of radiation exposure to both workers and members of the public," the document quoted from Internet-based environmental organisation Zero Waste America.

"The American Gypsum Association does not accept gypsum made with contaminated materials. Contaminated gypsum in the USA has resulted in a class action against the supplier and the importers," the groups said.

The two residents groups presented the document today after the end of the public viewing and feedback period for Lynas' long-term waste management plan that must be approved by regulators before it begins operations.

Local residents and environmentalists have criticised Lynas Corp for not having a long-term waste management plan and claimed the company would store radioactive waste onsite, which is about 2km from the nearest residential area.

But Lynas has said a permanent depository facility (PDF) for radioactive waste from its controversial rare earth plant will only be needed in a "worst-case scenario" where it is unable to reprocess its waste into commercial products.

According to Lynas, refining rare earth ore from Mount Weld, West Australia will result in three forms of residue, two of which have a radiation level of below 1 Becquerel per gramme (Bq/g) which is considered non-radioactive and outside of regulatory control by both international and local authorities.

It plans to recycle these two wastes into synthetic gypsum and fertiliser although the process has not been finalised.

However, its water leach purification (WLP) residue is projected to have a radiation level of 6 Bq/g, regarded as "very low-level" radioactive waste.

But Lynas, which received an additional funding boost of RM700 million this week through the sale of bonds, says it is "very confident" it can dilute the WLP to below 1 Bq/g to be

used as a base in road building.

The anti-Lynas groups also questioned today whether the market “can fully absorb the colossal amount produced given that Lynas will be producing at least 300,000 tonnes of contaminated waste every year.”

Putrajaya bowed to public pressure in April after sustained opposition from local residents and environmentalists due to fears of radiation pollution and put the project on ice pending a review by international experts.

In July, the government agency adopted 11 recommendations set out by the review and said it would not allow Lynas to begin operations or import rare earth ore until all conditions, which include a comprehensive, long-term and detailed plan for managing radioactive waste, are met.

According to Lynas, regulators Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) will meet on January 30 to decide on whether to issue a pre-operating licence which will be followed by a full licence within two years if the plant meets safety requirements outlined in its application.

Lynas is anticipating a windfall of RM8 billion a year from 2013 onwards from the manufacture of rare earth metals that are crucial to the manufacture of high-technology products such as smartphones, hybrid cars and bombs.

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