

Where exactly is 'abroad', Lynas opponents ask trade minister
The Malaysian Insider
March 07, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, March 7 — Himpunan Hijau wants Datuk Mustapa Muhamed to reveal the location beyond the borders of Malaysia that would accept Lynas Corp's purportedly massive amounts of toxic waste should a suitable dumpsite be unavailable domestically.

"Where exactly is 'abroad'?" its chairman Wong Tack asked in a statement today.

"Identify and prove to us which country outside of Malaysia is willing to accept this massive toxic wastes. Tell us which third world country Lynas will invade and pollute next. We want to know the full details," he added.

Himpunan Hijau is among numerous groups that have emerged in the last year in opposition to the Australian rare earth producer, Lynas Corp, and its RM700 million plant in the country.

Wong was responding to the international trade and industry minister who had previously defended Lynas Corp, saying the Sydney-based firm had sent a letter of undertaking to the government promising to send its rare earth processing residue abroad if it cannot find a suitable waste disposal site in Malaysia.

The anti-Lynas lobbyist also demanded to know how much radioactive waste the miner plans to accumulate as well as the duration that it would be stored for at a temporary dumpsite before it is shipped out.

He claimed in his statement that the proposed local dump is located in an unsuitable swampy area in the Gebeng industrial zone, on the outskirts of coastal Kuantan.

Wong further demanded Mustapa publicly disclose the names and data collection methods of those the federal minister said had been consulted over the project to show that no one had been "manipulated".

"Mustapa must understand that public consultation and data collection is a science," he said.

He chastised the minister for rounding on Himpunan Hijau by claiming the group has a "vested interest" in opposing the Lynas project.

Wong countered today that the group's concerns are due to the federal government's apparent haste in pushing the project through and riding roughshod over questions from the public, which he said only heightened their alarm over the issue.

He urged the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to launch an investigation into whether improper channels had been used to allow the Australian firm in on a seemingly lopsided deal in its favour.

The Malaysian Insider

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