

**Liow says Lynas must prove safety**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**March 24, 2012**  
**By Lee Wei Lian**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 — Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said today Lynas Corp must now prove it is safe after Western Australia authorities rejected the possibility of any waste being transported back there.

The Australian miner has insisted it will treat radioactive residue from its controversial refinery in Kuantan to decontaminate it and then gave Putrajaya its assurance it will send the residue abroad if it could not find a suitable disposal solution here.

But the Malaysian Insider reported yesterday the state government said it was illegal for Australia to import any waste product, whether radioactive or not, putting more pressure on Lynas to convince the public of the safety of its facility.

"Our stand is if the Lynas plant is found to be harmful to health, it cannot operate," Liow told reporters in a press conference here.

The health minister also said that the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on Lynas should be allowed to do its work.

Liow (picture) had also said late last month that the Sydney-based firm must find a way to ship the waste back to Australia, failing which no temporary operating licence (TOL) will be issued.

Local nuclear regulators had said on March 1 Australia's refusal to accept radioactive waste should not affect Lynas' efforts to return residue from its rare earths plant to the source.

But Western Australia Minister for Mines and Petroleum Norman Moore told the state's legislative council earlier this week it would not allow the residue, which Lynas says it can treat to reduce its radioactivity, to be returned to its source.

"Commonwealth legislation prohibits the importation by Australia of any waste product produced from offshore processing of any mineral resources purchased here," he said in a written response to Mining and Pastoral Region member Robin Chapple obtained by The Malaysian Insider.

Lynas had maintained that waste from its refinery in Kuantan would not be hazardous, and that the radioactive residue could be recycled for "commercial applications".

The government has been under pressure from groups to shut down the rare earths project over safety fears, but Putrajaya has yet to make a final decision on the project that was first earmarked for Terengganu.

Parliament earlier this week approved the formation of a PSC on the controversial rare earths refinery.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) subsequently announced a boycott of the panel, saying it has no power to decide the fate of the RM2.3 billion project.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/liow-says-lynas-must-prove-safety/>