

Lynas whitewashing refinery safety concerns, says Fuziah
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 — PKR's Fuziah Salleh has accused Lynas Corp of whitewashing safety concerns of its planned refinery in Kuantan by claiming there is a "concerted political campaign" against the plant's construction,

The Australian miner's boss, Nicholas Curtis, attributed persistent opposition to the rare earths plant as a political campaign, saying last week it was based on "misinformation", and "is sabotaging the science-based, regulatory process established in Malaysia and confidence in that process."

Curtis further claimed the persistent scare tactic was hurting not only its project but Malaysia's draw as an investment hub.

In response, Fuziah (picture) accused the Lynas Corp head of "deviating" from the real issue of safety, saying that a simple comparative study showed the Lynas refinery did not support any form of "sustainable development."

"They are not addressing concerns of safety, whitewashing safety concerns, silent about safety issues.

"They have only addressed radiation aspects, external radiation... they are narrow-minded in terms of perspective of radiation," the PKR vice-president told The Malaysian Insider.

Fuziah said comparing the planned Lynas plant in Gebeng, Pahang, the Molycorp rare earths plant in Mt Pass, California, the Arafura plant in Whyalla, Southern Australia and Ashton in Australia showed "alarming stark contrasts."

Unlike the Lynas plant, the other three refineries' radioactive wastes are sent back to the respective mines.

"Lynas has no concrete radioactive waste management plan. Lynas claims it can store its waste onsite forever.

"It also claims to have completed research to commercialise the radioactive waste from the various waste streams," said Fuziah.

The Lynas plant, she added, would have 500 tonnes of liquid discharge per hour channelled into the Balok River.

Comparatively, Molycorp and Arafura had "zero liquid discharges", explained Fuziah.

"For Ashton, an estimated 10 per cent will leach into the ground."

"He (Curtis) is patronising by saying that opposition to the plant will hurt Malaysia's investment.

"Just because you bring in revenue, it does not mean you can tell us what to do," she said.

"Lynas must have the decorum to implement here the same stringent standards that they have to practise in Australia," said the PKR MP.

The High Court had last week ruled against a local resident group's attempt for a review of the government's award of a temporary operating licence for the RM700 million Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP) in Gebeng.

Last Tuesday, Lynas Corp's Malaysian subsidiary said the plant would be ready to fire up operations in three weeks' time.

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