

Call For Immediate Solutions For Pollution Issues In Cameron Highlands

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 17 (Bernama) -- The Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands (REACH), a community based organisation formed by a group of Cameron Highlands residents alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating environment, has called on their newly-elected member of Parliament, Datuk Seri G.Palanivel to solve the critical pollution issues in the constituency.

Its president, R.Ramakrishnan, said this was because uncontrolled land clearing activities were being carried out in several forest reserve areas to the extent of causing river pollution in Cameron Highlands.

"It is learnt that the land are being cleared to be used as illegal vegetable farms. REACH, on behalf of Cameron Highlands residents, had lodged several reports to the authority, including through the media, but no action has ever been taken against the illegal vegetable farmers," he told Bernama here.

In the 13th general election on May 5, Palanivel, who contested on Barisan Nasional (BN) ticket, defeated M.Manogaran of DAP with 462-vote majority.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when announcing his Cabinet line-up on Wednesday, named Palanivel as Natural Resources and Environment Minister.

Ramakrishnan said tests conducted by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) researchers a few years ago revealed that river waters in Cameron Highland were polluted with toxic pesticides and that could affect the residents' health.

"The toxic water pollution is caused by the opening of farms, particularly upstream of Sungai Terla water catchment areas and treatment plant.

"This will definitely affect the quality of clean water supplied to the residents and visitors in Cameron Highlands, which is one of Malaysia's famous tourist destinations," he said, adding that all relevant quarters should pay attention on the issues.

Meanwhile, Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (Fomca) deputy secretary-general Foon Weng Lian said the ministry led by Palanivel should find immediate solutions to river pollution issues in Cameron Highlands as the rivers were the source of water supply for the residents.

"The river pollution issues have been raised by various non-governmental organisations, but nothing has been forthcoming and the farmers still carrying out the illegal farming activities," said Foon, who is also Water and Energy Consumer Association of Malaysia (Wecam) secretary-general.

Foon said as the Cameron Highlands member of Parliament, Palanivel should take appropriate actions to ensure regular monitoring activities be carried out so that the pollution issues did not worsen.

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