

Forest City developer wants thorough investigation into mass fish death

The Malaysian Insider

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Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd (CGPV), the master developer and creator of the RM600 billion Forest City project, wants an investigation to be conducted to dispel claims that the project is the reason for the mass fish deaths that reportedly affected fish farmers in the Johor Straits.

Its executive director Datuk Md Othman Yusof, in a statement, said it was important that a marine specialist carry out a proper investigation to try and ascertain the actual cause of death of the fishes "rather than make a speculative assumption without proper verification".

"It is important to remember that CGPV voluntarily stopped work eight months ago, while we conducted a 'Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment' (DEIA).

"We did this voluntarily to ascertain that we are working with the environment and not against it," he said.

Md Othman added that during the planning of the project, the company had invested heavily in research to understand details such as sediment flow and the hydro-dynamic-impact to protect elements of the environment.

"The DEIA, which covers the measures proposed to minimise or mitigate environmental impacts through integrated and workable solutions, reaffirmed that our guidelines and standards were compliant," he said.

Md Othman said this following reports of mass fish deaths in the Johor Straits over the past few weeks.

The Malaysian Insider reported today that fishermen and farmers in the Tanjung Kupang waters suspected that the Forest City development could have contributed to the incident.

Unable to recoup losses, many of the fish farmers said they were at risk of closing down their business forever.

It was reported that previous episodes have also been attributed to plankton blooms, brought about by rapid changes in water temperature, poor water circulation, and higher than usual nutrient levels in the water.

A BBC report on March 6 had said the scene on the beach looked like a "mass grave" and even after the first batch was cleared up, the next high tide brought in a new wave of dead marine life.

In the same CGPV statement, an environment monitoring company, Asian

Environmental Solutions Sdn Bhd said that water quality tests carried out did not find any connection between the project and the death of the fishes.

"From a water quality perspective, we have been carrying out tests on a daily and monthly basis for the past year and there have been no major or sustained anomalies in the readings which could potentially point to the death of the fish.

"There could be quite a number of causes, including upstream pollution or a seasonal phenomenon known as plankton bloom," the statement said.

Plankton bloom, it said, is a phenomenon that occurs periodically and cyclically, during droughts and dry spells such as that experienced in the Johor Straits.

"The phenomenon sees the plankton absorbing more oxygen from the water than normal, ultimately causing the fish to suffocate," the statement said. – March 15, 2015.

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