

Residents optimistic Lynas will fulfill govt conditions

18/08/2019

KUANTAN, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- The residents in Balok are optimistic that Lynas Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Lynas) will meet three conditions set by the government in renewing its plant operation' s licence for another six months.

Kampong Balok chief Mansor Mokhtar, 48, said the decision should push Lynas to take more serious action in finding the permanent deposit facility (PDF) for water leach purification (WLP) residue, as required by the government.

“I believe Lynas can meet the conditions set because prior to this, whenever they were given conditions to comply with, they were working hard to do that. The government' s decision to renew the licence is good not only for Lynas employees, but also for the development of the surrounding area.

“Lynas needs to use this six-month period to better explain its rare earth processing plant here to the public, which may not have obtained the correct information,” he said when contacted by Bernama here today.

On Aug 15, the government has renewed Lynas' licence for another six months, but with three conditions, namely, Lynas will have to identify a specific site to construct a PDF and to obtain written permission from the state government for the use of that site. Lynas will have to end all research and development activities related to the use of the radioactive WLP residue as Condisoil in the field of agriculture.

Another Kuantan resident, Datuk Shaharuddin Shamsuddin, 69, described the government's decision has provided a 'relief' to 1,000 Lynas employees, many of whom were locals.

He said, based on his own experience, Lynas plant which has been operating since 2012 has provided a wealth of economic benefits to the local population apart from being active in its corporate social responsibility towards those living in the surrounding area.

“We sincerely hope that Lynas and Pahang government can reach an agreement on the PDF site within the required time frame so that the plant can continue to operate,” he said.

For Bahazelan Abd Wahab, 65, who expressed his support for the government’ s decision, said he was sure that the residents in Balok would continue to oppose the Lynas operation if they found it was unsafe for nearby residents.

However, he claimed that he had not heard of a person fell ill due to the plant operations for the past seven years.

“We are not villagers who are clueless of the plant’ s operations as there are educated people among us here.

“In fact, we have heard explanation by those who are educated in this regard who informed us that Lynas operations are conducted in a safe and orderly manner,” he said.

Meanwhile, Pahang Youth Council president Wan Emril Nizam Wan Embong said Lynas could benefit from a trade war between the United States and China, which would indirectly benefit Malaysia.

It was widely known that Lynas provided an option for the industry to obtain rare earth material apart from China, so Malaysia would benefit from it as well, he said.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/general/news.php?id=1758109>

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