



## **RESPONSE**

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SECRETARY GENERAL  
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

**TO THE COLUMN IN THE NEW STRAITS TIMES BY MS KALBANA  
PERIMBANAYAGAM ON "LACK OF ASSETS HAMPERS FIRE  
FIGHTING AT ILLEGAL DUMPING SITE"**

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The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) has taken note of the article published in the New Straits Times on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018, titled "Lack of Assets Hampers Fire Fighting at Illegal Dumping Site" and thanks the writer for highlighting the issues contained therein.

The Ministry through the Department of Environment (DOE) had already received a report from the Selangor State Disaster Management Unit about the fire at the illegal waste disposal site located at Taman Pinggiran Putera, Petaling, Selangor. The size of the illegal waste disposal site is estimated at 2 acres while the area affected is 1.5 acres. Extinguishing work is being carried out by the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia in collaboration with the relevant agencies.

The nearest affected residential area is located approximately 100 meters from the illegal waste disposal site. The air quality mobile monitoring system has been activated to monitor the current situation. The DOE is also in the process of taking action against the perpetrators Under Section 29 (A) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 while working hand in hand with the other agencies until the fire is successfully extinguished.

## PROHIBITION OF OPEN BURNING

During this upcoming hot and dry season, open burning is **strictly prohibited**. The State and Local Governments and all land owners are advised to monitor fire prone areas such as landfills, forests, peatlands, farms, agricultural and industrial areas and to take measures to prevent open burning.

Under Section 29 (A) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974, any party found guilty of open burning can be imposed a **maximum compound of RM2,000 or upon being charged in court, they can be fined up to RM500,000 or imprisoned for up to five years, or both.**

One of the biggest challenges that the government faces in dealing with pollution is public apathy towards open burning. Despite the ban on open burning under the Environmental Quality Act, both the business community and general public continue to carry out open burning. This situation is further aggravated by illegal dumpsite operators who also take the easy way out by burning their waste at the dumpsites.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry will continue to undertake public awareness campaigns to educate the public, as well as taking legal action against offenders who contribute to all forms of pollution.

The Department of Environment urges the public to be our eyes and ears and help us to nip potential problems in the bud by putting out small fires as well as reporting any cases of open burning and forest fires or suspicious activities in a timely manner to the **Fire and Rescue Services Department (999) and DOE (Hotline: 1-800-88-2727)**. Let us work together to make our hot season as pleasant and haze and pollution free as possible.

For more informations.

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