

Support campaign to keep river clean

SEMENYIH River has been the source of water for the Semenyih dam (pic) since 2005. The river, which has its source at Bukit Ulu Semenyih (450m above sea level) is 37km long and is divided into three stages – upstream, midstream and downstream.

The Semenyih dam and water treatment plant was built to meet the water supply demand from Putrajaya, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Klang Valley and Semenyih.

At the end of 2016, the water treatment plant was closed several times due to contamination of the Semenyih River.

Closure of the treatment plant caused water supply disruption in 450 areas in the districts of Petaling, Hulu Langat, and Kuala Langat.

The frequent closure of water treatment plants has made consumers, both domestic and commercial, angry. As such, NGOs like the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (Fomca), Forum Air Malaysia (FAM) and Water and Energy Consumers Association (Wecam) have taken the initiative to tackle the problem of pollution in Semenyih River.

Fomca, FAM and Wecam carried out a site visit and traced the source of the pollution to several areas including industrial zones, landfills, burial grounds and agricultural land. Most of these areas



are located upstream of Semenyih River. Garbage from the town and villages near the river also contributed to the pollution.

Based on these factors, we concluded that majority of the people in Semenyih are not fully aware on the importance of the river.

Fomca, FAM and Wecam will be conducting awareness campaigns for residents living near Semenyih River as a means to address this problem. The campaigns will be held over a three-year period and will involve various activities such as *gotong-royong* and competitions to clean up the dirty areas, talks for

the public and students in Semenyih, and consultations on alternative waste disposal for the industrial sector.

This campaign aims to make residents, traders and manufacturers around Sungai Semenyih aware of the dire consequences facing them if their activities continue to pollute the river.

A similar programme should be carried out on the Langat River, a main source of raw water for seven water treatment plants in Selangor, namely Sg Langat, Bukit Tampoi, Cheras Batu 11, Salak Tinggi, Sg Pangsoon, Sg Serai and

Sg Lolo. If the Langat River is contaminated, these water treatment plants would need to be closed temporarily.

On Oct 8, 2016, the Langat and Cheras water treatment plants had to be closed due to contamination of water from Semantan River. Closure of the water treatment plant resulted in disruption of water supply to several areas including Cheras, Kuala Lumpur and the Petaling district.

Fomca, FAM and Wecam have taken the initiative to raise public awareness about the importance of the river, but we need the cooperation of all parties to make the campaign successful.

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Letters must carry the sender's full name, address and telephone number. A pseudonym may be included.