

Extension on bauxite mining ban?

DECISION: Minister to present findings on stockpile clearing to cabinet

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NATURAL Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the moratorium on bauxite mining in Kuantan, Pahang, might be extended until all conditions set by the authorities are met by the stakeholders.

These include adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) on bauxite transportation, designated routes and management of stockpile sites.

For example, only lorries that had been certified by the authorities are allowed to transport the ore.

The moratorium was supposed to end in April but was extended by three months until July 15 to give more time for the stakeholders to clear their remaining stockpiles.

"I will present the findings to the cabinet so that a decision can be made," Wan Junaidi said in a reply to Fuziah Salleh (PKR-Kuantan) in Dewan Rakyat here yesterday during a debate on the National Land Code (Amendment) Bill 2016.

She asked Wan Junaidi to clarify on what seemed to be a lack of commitment towards strict and specific regulations such as central stockpiling, detailed environmental impact assessments and des-

ignated routes for bauxite lorries.

Bauxite-mining activities in Kuantan were first suspended for three months in Jan 15 to address the impact of ore mining following concerns about environmental deterioration, adverse health effects, damaged roads and toxic contamination of water due to bauxite residue.

Fuziah also raised concerns that rivers and air would be polluted once mining activities were allowed to resume as most of the mines were located upstream, in water catchment areas.

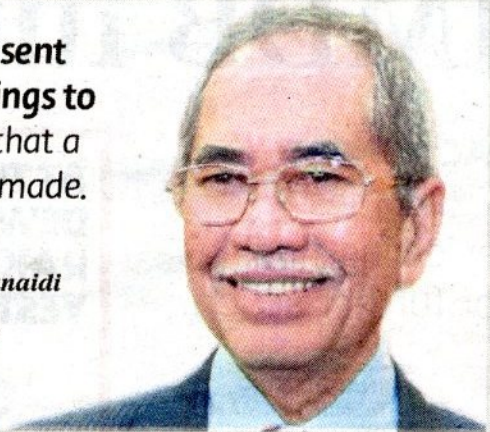
Wan Junaidi said there were 12 bauxite stockpiles in Kuantan, including in Kuantan Port.

He said the stockpiles, which amounted to 3.7 million tonnes, must be cleared to prevent bauxite from polluting water sources when it rained.

He added that some bauxite

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Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar
Natural resources and environment minister



stockpiles were stored in buildings to avoid detection by the authorities, who used drones.

"The drones can't enter buildings, so we are unable to estimate the amount of bauxite.

"My officers had to go on site to

check each of the stockpiles," he said.

The Santubong member of parliament also said he would ensure that bauxite mining would not affect water catchment areas.