



**FEDERATION OF MALAYSIAN
CONSUMERS ASSOCIATIONS**

**MEMORANDUM TO STOP THE BUKIT LARUT
CABLE CAR PROJECT**

The memorandum is written to the attention of:

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Menteri Besar of Perak Darul Ridzuan

Copy to:

DYTM Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah
Crown Prince of Perak Darul Ridzuan

YB Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

YB Dato' Shaziman Abu Mansor
Minister of Energy, Water and Communication

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal for Cable Car Project in Bukit Larut is being revived under the new government. From 1997, FOMCA have been against any development in Bukit Larut as it can be detrimental to the natural condition of the hill. FOMCA and WWF have conducted an ecology study to prove that this project will destroy the ecosystem of Bukit Larut.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association will fight for the rights of Taiping Citizens and Malaysian for the right to safe and healthy environment. Such development should not take place as it is a treasure that is recognized by State government, Federal government as well as international bodies. Reserve forest is for the purpose of research and education.

The state government has already been given memorandum such as this to protest the development projects proposed previously. The world population is effect of global warming on our lives. However, the emergence of such a project indicates the risk taking without proper studies on its effect to Bukit Larut and its surroundings.

The Perak state government has been reminded of Bukit Larut's sensitivity and its impact to the flora and fauna as well as the water catchment area. It the very responsibility of the government to ensure that the ecosystem is protected and preserved for the benefit o the future generation.

Every government has the responsibility to Project the future of their citizens. Do not destroy the Taiping citizen's treasure.

2. JUSTIFICATION IN OPPOSING THIS PROJECT

2.1 Bukit Larut is a water catchment area.

The water catchments area is managed by Perak Water Board. The catchments area supplies water to Taipingites and the surrounding areas. Due to the steep hill slopes, the probability of land slide is very much higher and this will cause disruption in the water supply to the surrounding areas.

The construction areas around the water catchments area is only a small portion. However, the erosion and landslide that it may induce will pollute the water in the catchments areas.

According to the Perak Water Board, the overall area of water catchments is 21.53 squared km. The water catchments area in the surrounding of Bukit Larut is as follows:

LIST OF WATER CATCHMENT AREA IN BUKIT LARUT

(District of Larut, Matang & Selama)

Bil.	Water treatment facility	Name of river	Position of the intake		Area of Water Catchment Area (km.per)
			Longitude (East)	Latitude (North)	
1	Taiping Headworks	Sg. Ranting	100° 46' 15"	4° 52' 45"	1.88
2		Sg. Anak Ranting	100° 46' 15"	4° 52' 53"	1.57
3		Sg. Batu Teguh	100° 46' 29"	4° 50' 39"	3.33
4		Sg. Tupai	100° 46' 40"	4° 50' 14"	3.84
5		Sg. Air Terjun	100° 45' 53"	4° 52' 05"	1.18
6	Air Kuning	Sg. Larut	100° 46' 13"	4° 48' 47"	8.03
7		Sg. Buluh	100° 44' 45"	4° 48' 41"	1.70
TOTALJUMLAH KESELURUHAN					21.53

Source: Lembaga Air Perak

The water treatment facilities supply clean water to the surrounding people. Potential impact to the water catchment area is high. Treatment of water and water catchment are two different entities. Even if, Lembaga Air Perak improve the treatment facility, the facility is in risk of getting less raw water if the water reserve is disturbed.

2.2 Bukit Larut gazetted as Reserve Forest in 1910.

In 1910, 7130 hector of Bukit Larut (Maxwell Hill) was gazetted as Forest reserve. In 1962, 2747 hector of the Bukit Larut Forest was gazetted again as the Larut Hills Virgin Jungle reserve. As a forest which is reserved as Reserved Forest for water catchments, research and education, it is not a good move by the state government to consider the cable car project.

Malaysia is experiencing the effect of global warming, and in such conditions, it is important to preserve the forest areas that are available and research due to global warming to this forest must be increased. Research also proves that metabolism rate of tropical trees are reducing due to global warming. With the increase of human activity in Bukit Larut, ecosystem stability will be affected.

2.3 Clasification as Flora and Fauna Habitat in 2002.

Bukit Larut was given the classification as the Habitat Flora and Fauna in 2002 by the Federal Government. This shows the importance to preserve the stability of the natural ecosystem in Bukit Larut.

The undisturbed ecosystem by human activities is important. We can see that a lot of flora and fauna that are listed in a research conducted by FOMCA, Education and Research Association for Consumers (ERA Consumer Malaysia) and WWF Malaysia will be affected if projects like this continue. The results of the study was published in 1997 and the copies were given to the relevant officers from state and federal government.

Some of the New Species found:

	<p><i>Macrocalamus chanardi</i> sp. nov. is described to accommodate these latter specimens from Bukit Larut, Cameron Highlands and Bukit Fraser of West Malaysia Reference: David, P et al (2004), <i>A Re-Evaluation of the Taxonomy of Macrocalamus Lateralis Günther, 1864 (Serpentes, Colubridae), With the Descriptions of Two New Species</i>, The Raffles Bulletin Of Zoology 2004 52(2): 635-645</p>
	<p>Holotype of <i>Sphenomorphus bukitchensis</i> only found in Bukit Larut and Bukit Fraser. Reference: Grismer, L (2007), <i>A New Species Of Small Montane Forest Floor Skink (Genus Sphenomorphus Fitzinger 1843) From Southern Peninsular Malaysia</i>, Herpetologica, 63(4), 2007, 544–551 E 2007, The Herpetologists' League, Inc.</p>
	<p><i>Pseudocalotes larutensis</i> sp . nov.(TNHC5 8040, holotype, adult male). Reference: A New Species of <i>Pseudocalotes</i> (Squamata: Agamidae) from Bukit Larut, West Malaysia Author(s): Jakob Hallermann and Jimmy A. McGuire Source: Herpetologica, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Sep., 2001), pp. 255-265 Published by: Herpetologists' League Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3893094 Accessed: 18/01/2009 21:50</p>

2.4 Clasification by United Nations Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre

According to the report, A global overview of protected areas on the world heritage list of particular importance for biodiversity – 2000, by World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UNEP, Bukit Larut was classified as on of the ***Regional Centres of Plant Diversity***.

The importance of the plant diversity which is recognized by the world body shows the importance for us to preserve it as national treasure. This will also help towards enhancing the research in the field of biotechnology.

Malaysia is also listed as one of the 12 Mega Biodiversity in the world. So, every component in the forest ensured our listing must be protected.

2.5 Steep slopes can be damaged by the cable car pillars

According to the Erosion Risk Map, Bukit Larut is situated in the high risk area and soil loss is recorded to be over 150 ton/ha/year (highest). The stability of the pillars becomes a bigger question. At the same time, land slide may occur due to the disturbance to the hill slopes. Reoccurrence of landslide may take place continuously. Bukit Larut also falls under the first category for sensitive environment category under the National Physical Plan.

The pillars induce increase of load to the unstable slopes, and according to the geotechnical engineering, unstable slopes such as in Bukit Larut becomes a risk, human and the environment is at risk due to this. The pillar placing process itself will induce the instability even if it is done using helicopter. The load from the pillars (point load) to the unstable slope creates a grey area.

According to Prof Dr Roslan Zailan Abidin, Director of National Landslide Research Centre (UiTM), places Bukit Larut as one of the 14 high risk landslide areas in Malaysia.

2.6 Increase in waste due to tourist increase

Increase of tourist in flow which is around five times of the normal condition to Bukit Larut will cause increase in solid waste and bodily waste (sewerage) from the visitors / tourist. More of such wastes need to be transported out. There will

be an increase in air pollution due to rubbish pick up trucks increased frequency of traveling.

Uncontrolled discarding of rubbish (into the forest) – example in Cameron Highlands, the water fall areas is full with rubbish due to uncontrolled rubbish disposal.

Piping for the sewerage needs to be developed and the leakage may pose immediate effect to the sensitive ecosystem such as Bukit Larut, moreover it is also a water catchment area.

According to Department of Environment (DOE), they have admitted that they do not have jurisdiction over this project in both to approve or reject. The usage of DOE's name as being the agency that has approved is wrong. Even if the pillars are taking 30 square feet of land area, the additional facilities to manage the increase in visitors will be detrimental to the environment.

2.7 Increase of 5 times in the number of visitors a day (from 200 to 1000)

Increase in human activity in any areas will give insecurity to the animals which are sensitive to human presence and migration of such animals will take place. Such migration will give effect to the natural food chain and eventually will pose threat to the ecosystem.

When there is an increase in visitors who wants comfortable and luxury stay, another situation to increase the infrastructure and buildings that will cause deforestation. An increase of impermeable surface (surface that does not absorb water) to the rainwater (average rainfall, 5000mm) and increase in surface runoff. Such an increase will cause higher risk to soil erosion and landslide. Overall increasing the soil sediments in the rivers and eventually create another chain reaction which degrade the environmental quality.

This is clearly against the objective of gazetting an area as Forest Reserve for water catchments. Increase of pollutants in the water used for treatment will increase the treatment cost and eventually the consumers have to pay for failure of government development plan.

2.8 The right of Taipingites mainly and Malaysians to have the natural heritage preserved in its original condition

The people of Taiping has the right to know the side effect if the project fails. After receiving the information, they can see the importance to preserve the Bukit Larut in its original condition.

At the same time, the relevant parties did not see their responsibility towards the future generation in preserving this national treasure for them to benefit from it as well. The Taipingites do not need another Bukit Antarabangsa tragedy in Taiping.

3.0 CONCLUSION AND FOMCA'S STAND

FOMCA is totally against the suggestion by Perak State Government to go ahead with this project without project studies and comparison. Environment should be enjoyed in its natural condition and with zero impact.

If the Project fails and damages the ecosystem of bukit larut, the Perak State Government or even the contractor will not be able to return Bukit LArut to its original condition.

It is our responsibility to ensure natural resources of our nation to be preserved and consumed sustainably so that the future generation can enjoy it as well.

Bagi pihak Majlis Tertinggi FOMCA,

Datuk Marimuthu Nadason

Presiden