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Don't be fooled into taking money, Tanjong Tokong fishermen tell southern counterparts



Fishermen affected by the STP1 & STP2 called on the state authorities to resolve their issues first before commencing on another reclamation project.

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By OPALYN MOK
Wednesday, 31 Jul 2019 4:36 PM MYT

GEORGE TOWN, July 31 — Tanjong Tokong fishermen has warned their counterparts in the south of the island not to be fooled by any compensation the state government offered under the Penang South Reclamation (PSR) project.

Tanjong Bungah fishermen community community unit chief Ismail Din said the PSR will possibly bring about worse impact that what the northeast fishermen experienced due to the reclamation under Seri Tanjung Pinang 1 (STP1) and Seri Tanjung Pinang 2 (STP2).

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He advised the fishermen on Permatang Damar Laut and areas affected by the PSR not to be easily fooled by offers of compensation by the project delivery partner or the state government.

“The long term effects of the PSR project will be far worse than any compensation they give, the fishermen may lose their entire source of income,” he claimed.

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He said PSR is a larger scale reclamation project to reclaim 4,500 acres of land through the creation of three man-made islands as compared to STP1 and STP2.

STP 1 covers about 240 acres while STP2 covers 760 acres.

He claimed that the fishermen affected by the STP1 and STP2 reclamation were only given RM15,000 compensation.

“We fell into their trap with their RM15,000 compensation so don’t be like us, don’t fall into their trap by any compensation they offer,” he said.

Another fisherman, Mohd Ishak Abd Rahman, said the RM15,000 compensation paid in 2015 was barely enough to pay for their loss of livelihood.

The Tanjung Tokong Fishermen Community chairman said the developer only paid that meagre sum and nothing else after that.

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to continue fishing and we had asked for better fishing boats to go out to sea four years ago but our requests were ignored," he said.

A small group of fishermen affected by STP2 held a press conference and peaceful demonstration to highlight the challenges they faced due to the reclamation project.

In an immediate response, a Tanjung Pinang Development Sdn Bhd (TPD) spokesperson said the company had held ongoing engagement with the fishermen community within the project vicinity since 2003.

The spokesperson said TPD made ex-gratia payment to 152 affected fishermen and 61 assisting crew members on July 3, 2015.

"Subsequent to the first group who received the payment, TPD took the initiative to help 40 eligible fishermen and 15 crew members who were not in the list to make an appeal to the authorities and a second ex-gratia payment took place on October 31, 2015," he said.

He stressed that the ex-gratia amount and eligible fishermen were determined by state authorities and Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia.

TPD has also been constantly updating the fishermen through its SMS alert protocol of ongoing reclamation activities.

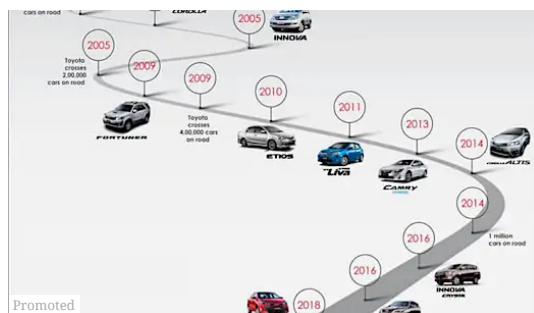
"The fishermen community has, on the whole, also accepted contributions such as TPD's school assistance programme, support for festive celebrations, open houses and others," he said.

TPD has all regulatory approvals for its STP2 development and will continue to act with strict emphasis on compliance, he added.

"All works are being carried out in adherence with the conditions of the approved Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Study as well as from all relevant authorities," he said.

He added that this also included online monitoring of the water quality level within the project area as part of the environmental mitigation measures.

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