

THE Selangor government is expected to receive a premium of RM323,774,578 if the Kuala Langat North Forest Reserve (KLNFR) development project goes ahead.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari said two companies who have submitted proposals to develop the forest would have to pay land premiums and land tax to the state as well as fulfil other conditions set by the state.

The companies are Titian Jutaria Sdn Bhd and Menteri Besar Incorporated.

He said 40% of the area proposed for degazettement was damaged by fire.

"It will require about RM1mil for the implementation of fire prevention programmes and forest fire operation at any one time. These include the construction of tube wells and fire breaks, rental of machinery during fires, usage of bombardiers and other logistics.

"Based on these high costs, the state would have to look into the need to retain the forest as well as its economic returns through a cost benefit analysis," he said during the state assembly sitting yesterday.

Amirudin added that other development activities around the forest was a threat to its sustainability.

He said additionally, part of the forest reserve would also make way for the development of the East Coast Railway Link (ECRL), covering 9.6ha.

"In accordance with Section 11(b) of the National Forestry Act (Application) Enactment 1985, the state may remove any land area within a permanent forest reserve if it is satisfied that the land is needed for economic use higher than the current use.

"The Selangor State Executive Council on Oct 16, 2019, approved 931ha of the KLNFR for land acquisition under Section 76 of the

Companies to pay land premiums

Selangor to get about RM323.7mil should forest reserve development proceed, says MB



Selangor has approved 931ha of forest for land acquisition last year under Section 76 of the National Land Code 1965. — Filepic



Amirudin says 40% of the area proposed for degazettement was damaged by fire.

National Land Code 1965.

"However, before this ownership process can go through, the applicants must go through the degazettement process," he said.

Amirudin added that this process included a public hearing, to gazette a bigger area as a forest reserve to replace the area that will be degazetted, compensatory damages on loss of forest benefits as well as other conditions.

He said from 12 potential sites, the state identified three suitable areas in Kuala Selangor, Sabak Bernam and Hulu Selangor to choose from and that the Selangor government would add almost 174ha to the new area.

"The Selangor Forestry Department has received 44,292 written objections against the proposal and the next step would be to call for a town hall meeting," he said.

The public hearing is in accordance with the Public Inquiry (Selangor) Rules 2014 and the National Forestry Act (Adoption) Enactment 1985, which makes the exercise (placement of notice) compulsory before a forest reserve can be degazetted.

StarMetro reported on Feb 18 that the forest reserve was under threat of degazettement that could reduce the presently protected 958ha to a mere 28ha.

If the state government proceeds with its proposal to degazette some 97% of the forest reserve, this could mean total destruction of the forest and its biodiversity, which would adversely impact indigenous people who relied on the forest.

Selangor Forestry Department placed a notice in a major daily on Feb 5 inviting stakeholders in Kuala Langat to voice objections to the proposal within 30 days.

The notice that the forest could be degazetted for a mixed development project shocked environmentalists and 2,000 Temuan Orang Asli community who lived off the forest.