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Project followed approved environmental impact assessment, says MRL

KUALA LUMPUR: The land clearing for the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project in Selangor does not involve any de-gazettement of forest reserves, including those within the Selangor State Park, says Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL).

Instead, the project owner said to safeguard the environment, the project had complied with the approved environmental impact assessment plan and erosion and sediment control plans guidelines, as well as conditions that were prescribed by the Environment Department (DOE) and Department of

Irrigation and Drainage.

"To facilitate preparatory works for the ECRL construction, MRL has obtained a right-of-way permit from the Forestry Department so that the contractors can enter the forest reserve to carry out licensed activities," MRL said in a statement yesterday, Bernama reported.

MRL, reported Bernama, was responding to recent claims by an NGO, which discovered land clearing activities in four areas in the Selangor State Park, and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari reportedly said the land clearings were linked to the ECRL developer.

On the EIA, a mandatory requirement under the Environmental Quality Act 1974, MRL said the assessment was submitted to the DOE on Nov 30, 2021, and was approved some three weeks later.

"For the record, the ECRL railway scheme for Section C2 (Gombak-Serendah-Port Klang) was granted by the Transport Ministry on Jan 14, 2022, after a three-month public inspection as per the statutory requirements of the Land Public Transport Act 2010.

"On Sept 14, 2022, we received approval from the Selangor state government to proceed with the

construction of the alignment in Selangor," it pointed out.

It added that the ECRL construction works on Section C2, which is fully located within Selangor, were being carried out tactfully in consultation with local communities and all relevant stakeholders and in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

"For our ongoing project in Selangor, we work closely with the authorities and government agencies at all levels, including the Federal Government, the Selangor government, Selangor Forestry Department, DOE and all relevant

local councils.

"In addition, both MRL and China Communications Construction (ECRL) Sdn Bhd (CCC-ECRL) are proactively holding meetings and engagement sessions with the Selangor state authorities and all stakeholders of the ECRL project, including the local communities living near the ECRL worksites," it said.

The company emphasised that together with the main contractor CCC-ECRL, it was committed to fully complying with all requirements set out by the authorities to protect the environment and safeguard public interest.