

# Food for Thought

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## Who let the haze out?

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LETTER TO EDITOR - 24th June 2013

### Who let the haze out?

It has been over 20 years Malaysia being made to suffer the haze originating from Indonesia due to land clearing. We have been using all diplomatic channels to solve this the ASEAN way. Have we been successful? If just across our border, a company releases toxic gas and few hundred of Malaysians die, will Department of Environment (DOE) and Malaysian government keep quiet? Similarly, this incident is industrial (agriculture) pollution. Indonesian Environment Minister have named few suspects and investigating few others. It does not matter they are Malaysian based company or not, impose Environment Quality Act (EQA) in full force. Do not chicken out when Indonesia mention Malaysian owned companies. Those whom are suffering are humans.

We in Malaysia have to increase our medical expenses for those with lung, heart and skin health complications. What about other losses of income. Who makes money and who is suffering? Imagine if the whole of next year is hazy, we can kiss good bye to Visit Malaysia Year 2014.

Malaysian Government, businesses and members of public must claim from the all the extra expenses incurred in healthcare, business loss due to haze and emergency situation, cloud seeding chemical cost, etc. This is in line with the EQA. These costs are on top of the fine that the suspects have to pay for breaking the law. I would also encourage Singapore Government to take similar action to bring these culprits to court.

If these companies and their bosses do not want to respect our law and court, there are many forms of pressure that can be imposed, especially economic pressure. If their palm oil products are banned, there is no economic benefit for them locally. This can be extended via

United Nation for a worldwide ban on their products in international market.

We need to stand up and fight for our own country's sovereignty. The 2 tigers in our coat of arms represent courage and strength. We need to live up to that mark! We should not be slaves of unscrupulous businessmen.

Piarapakaran S.

President

Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER)

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