

## **MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF PENANG**

By: YAB Chow Kon Yeow  
Penang Chief Minister  
Penang State Executive Councillor for Transport, Information, Land Matters and Land Development  
Date: 25 July 2018 (Wednesday)

### **Media statement by the Penang State Government responding to Penang NGOs:**

1. Penang Forum
2. Aliran – Anil Netto
3. Malaysian Nature Society
4. CHANT Citizen Awareness Group
5. Consumers Association of Penang
6. Tanjung Bungah Residents Association

- <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/07/25/penang-group-wants-pm-to-intervene-on-highway-project/>
- <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/07/25/a-sore-point-over-an-explosive-issue-experts-wary-of-amount-of-dynamite-to-be-used-on-penang-highway/>
- <https://www.malaymail.com/s/1655168/stop-building-more-highways-rexy-prakash-chacko>
- <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2018/07/23/after-undersea-tunnel-penang-to-blast-through-hills-now/>
- <http://anilnetto.com/environmentclimate-change/thousands-of-tons-of-explosives-to-blast-tunnels-through-penang-hill/>
- <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/2018/07/14/environmental-activists-against-pan-island-link-highway>
- <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2018/07/22/new-penang-highway-impact-on-air-quality-health-not-accurately-reported/>
- <http://anilnetto.com/environmentclimate-change/peoples-parkpgcc/women-protest-against-mega-highway-over-sungai-ara-linear-park/>

1. It has come to the attention of the Penang State Government that Penang Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been voicing concerns on the proposed construction of the Pan Island Link 1 (PIL 1) Highway, of which its EIA Report (Second Schedule) is currently under public display until 10 Aug 2018.
2. It has also come to the attention of the Penang State Government that there is clear misinformation on the portrayal of PIL 1, such as the use of inaccurate visuals and description which provokes unnecessary negative sentiments among the general public.
3. The Penang State Government welcomes open discourse on the Penang Transport Master Plan (PTMP), and while doing so, we wish to rectify inaccurate representation of PIL 1 to the public.

#### **A. Tunnelling on Penang’s hills and proposed construction method**

4. The ‘Drill and Blast’ tunnelling method is acknowledged as the mostly-used, established and proven effective method for tunnel excavation in the world.
5. The well-established method is widely used in many construction projects around the world and in Malaysia, as it can be applied to all types of rocks.

6. An example of highway tunnels built in Malaysia using this method, include the **Genting Sempah Tunnel**, the first highway tunnel in Malaysia. Officially opened in 1979, the 900m tunnel is located on the Karak Highway connecting Hulu Gombak in Selangor to Genting Sempah, Pahang.



Genting Sempah Tunnel

7. Another example of highway tunnel built using the same method is the 800m **Menora Tunnel** on the North–South Expressway Northern Route near Jelapang, Ipoh. Opened in 1986, the highway tunnel runs underneath the Keledang Range in Perak, Malaysia.



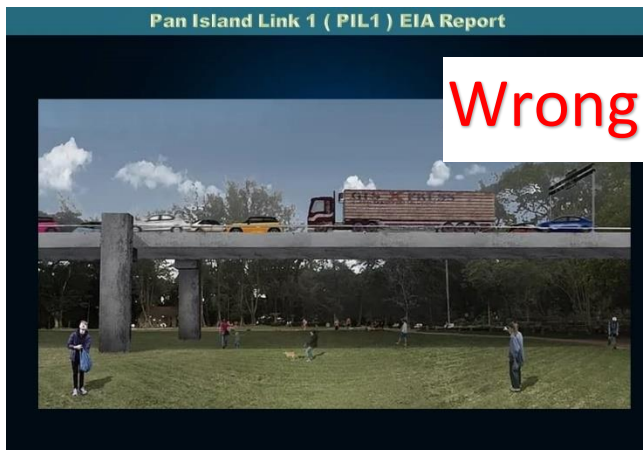
Menora Tunnel

8. It is clear the hills where the tunnels pass through are still standing tall today.
9. It needs to be emphasised that the **tunnel construction is carried out under controlled conditions with added safety measures to minimise potential concerns such as vibration, noise and dust**, such as:
- i. Installation of blasting mat to prevent fly rock dispersal and suppress noise and dust;
  - ii. Additional ground support such as bolting (strengthening of tunnel structure using bolts) and shotcreting (spraying of concrete to reinforce tunnel structure); and
  - iii. A full range of monitoring, ground surveillance and precautionary measures to protect workers, public, hillslope and property safety.
10. As tunnelling is a highly specialised form of construction, the Work Package Contractor will need to demonstrate high level of experience and expertise with a strong safety track record, before being considered for the job.

11. As stated in the PIL 1 EIA Report, the following international and Malaysian guidelines will be fully complied with to ensure the safety of workers and the public at large during the tunnelling process:
- i. Underground Construction (Tunnelling),  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration,  
US Department of Labor, OSHA 3115-06R (2003)
  - ii. Guidelines on Safety and Health in Tunnel Construction  
Industrial Health Division, Department of Occupational Safety and Health,  
Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia (July 1998)
12. **It would be misleading to highlight public's attention on the amount of explosives required, as opposed to the strict control measures that will be executed before, during and after the tunnel construction.**
13. **The question of how much explosives will be needed for tunnel construction is redundant, as it is only but a means to complete the tunnelling works. Instead, one should be asking what is the level of environmental and safety standards which we should adhere to.**
14. **Focusing the public's attention to unnecessary details will not only be counter-productive, but undermines the importance of PIL 1 to improve Penang Island's road network hierarchy and disperse worsening traffic congestion in key residential and commercial areas on the island.**

## **B. Youth Park, Sg Ara Linear Park and Penang Hill**

15. **The State Government has taken notice of the use of self-created pictures by certain parties to misrepresent PIL 1 and create unnecessary anxiety among the public,** such as below:



16. **The State Govt would like to inform that such practice is unhealthy and should NOT be encouraged, as it will lead to undesired negative perception among the public.**
17. **We would like to take this opportunity to urge the public not to be unduly influenced by incorrect information shared on social media and news/ blog portals.**

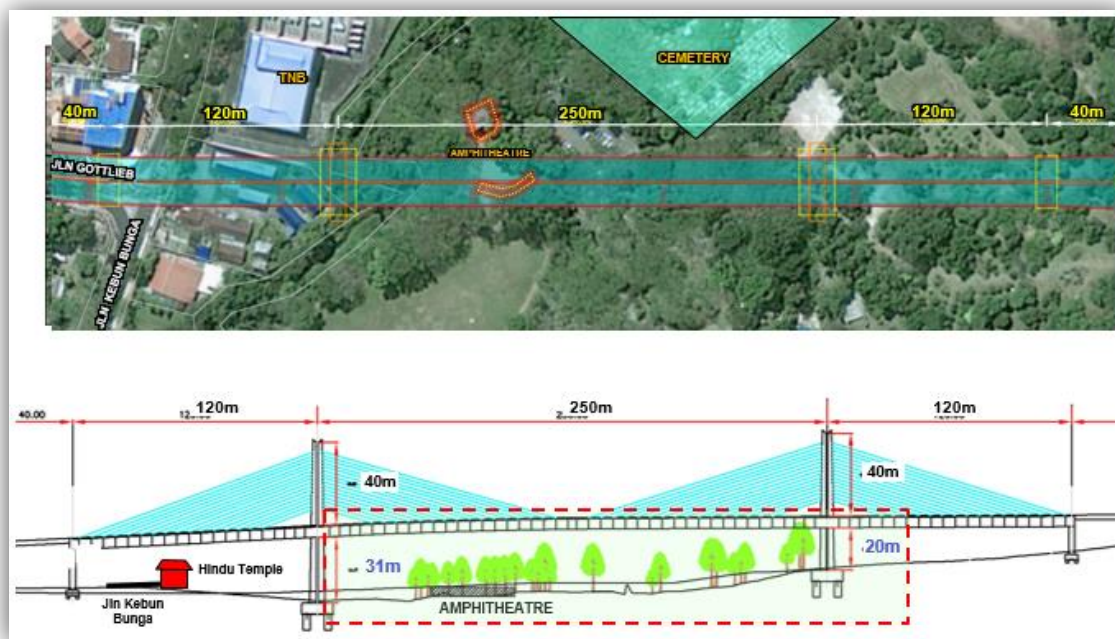


18. The correct visual below is used to describe the cable-stayed bridge in Youth Park within the PIL 1 EIA Report:



### Key highlights of PIL 1 construction at Youth Park:

- Park will be open to public during construction. Park goers will still be able to enjoy Youth Park as is.
- Access to Youth Park will NOT be affected.
- Park goers will not be affected by construction activities as these will take place within the cordoned area.
- The location where pier construction takes place will be fully cordoned off to ensure public safety.
- There will be very minimal disturbance to the existing greenery. The bridge is designed with pier height of 31m to avoid the old trees in the park.
- In the event of trees that are inevitably affected, these will be transplanted where possible. Replanting of new trees will be in accordance with MBPP requirement.



Cross-section view of the cable-stayed bridge at Youth Park showing the height of the piers above the trees and greenery in the park.

19. On Sg Ara Linear Park, the State Govt has taken note of the concerns of park goers and among the alternatives that are currently being looked into include reducing the number of piers, park beautification and upgrading of the park with new amenities, in consultation with local residents and the local council.
20. **The State Government is open to suggestions and ideas from the communities to make the park a conducive open space for recreation upon completion of PIL 1.** Other proposed mitigation measures such as noise barriers and a proposed pier height of up to 15m (5 storeys) will not impose major undue discomfort to park goers.
21. On the environmentally sensitive area of Penang Hill, a detailed study had been carried out to convert the earlier proposed viaduct design to a tunnel to avoid impact to the Penang Hill Special Area Plan (which took effect on 1 September 2016).
22. As a result of the alignment change at Penang Hill:
- **There will be no exposed part of the highway seen at Penang Hill.**
  - **The existing Penang Hill Special Area Plan is not expected to be affected in any apparent way with the new tunnel alignment, including the funicular railway.**
  - **Controlled blasting carried out at environmentally sensitive areas will be done under strict noise and vibration monitoring and ground surveillance during entire process by the PDP, in collaboration with the authorities.**
  - The State Government wishes to inform the public not to be apprehensive of the proposed underground construction, as the advancement of tunnelling technology today has enabled the potential effects of noise and vibration to be brought to a minimal.
23. All other mitigation measures concerning construction activities such as water quality, noise, vibration, traffic congestion, as well as other potential construction disruptions can be referred to in Chapter 8 of the EIA Report.
24. **This statement by the Penang State Government includes a statement by PIL 1 consultant Wiranda (M) Sdn Bhd on the alleged inaccuracy of the baseline air quality study contained in the EIA Report (Second Schedule).** The statement can be found in the following page.

# Attachment to Penang Chief Minister's Statement

25 July 2018

## Consultant Wiranda's response to comments on baseline Air Quality measure for PIL 1 Highway EIA Report (Second Schedule).

1. The ad-hoc ambient air quality monitoring (AAQM) for the EIA study was carried out by a SAMM [Laboratory Accreditation Scheme of Malaysia] accredited laboratory namely UiTM-A&A Laboratory (SAMM No.: 084).
2. **The results represent concentrations of the criteria air pollutants in the air at the identified sampling points during the period monitored (1 hour for NO<sub>2</sub>).**
3. **The standard method adopted is commonly practiced for EIA studies in Malaysia.**
4. It is noted that the Department of Environment Malaysia maintain a long term Continuous Air Quality Monitoring (CAMS) Station at Universiti Sains Malaysia. For comparison purposes, the calculated annual average for the criteria air pollutant of concern is about 45.80 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (PM<sub>10</sub>), 19.646 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (NO<sub>2</sub>) and 0.56017 ppm (CO) as shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Monthly Average Concentration of Criteria Pollutant in the Air Monitored at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Pulau Pinang, Malaysia for Year 2016**

Parameter	Unit	January	February	March	April	May	June
PM <sub>10</sub>	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	36.75	42.08	55.89	49.90	46.09	52.09
NO <sub>2</sub>	ppm	0.0102	0.0095	0.0099	0.0117	0.0131	0.0108
	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	19.176	17.86	18.612	21.996	24.628	20.304
CO	ppm	0.485	0.360	0.448	0.568	0.466	0.501

Parameter	Unit	July	August	September	October	November	December	Calculated Annual Average
PM <sub>10</sub>	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	54.43	47.96	41.41	42.00	40.01	40.97	<b>45.80</b>
NO <sub>2</sub>	ppm	0.0096	0.0100	0.0085	0.0101	0.0120	0.0100	<b>0.01045</b>
	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	18.048	18.8	15.98	18.988	22.56	18.8	<b>19.646</b>
CO	ppm	0.595	0.680	0.494	0.447	0.713	0.965	<b>0.56017</b>

Note: NO<sub>2</sub> Conversion: 1 ppm = 1880 µg/m<sup>3</sup>

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia. *Compendium of Environmental Statistics, 2017.*

5. **The modelled value i.e. 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> quoted for London cannot be directly compared to the Project Site as the climate conditions differ between Malaysia and United Kingdom where there is no winter condition.** The modelled value usually represents this period due to low dispersion characteristics.
6. The statement "Good" for monitored PM<sub>10</sub> represents the levels meeting the Interim Target 1 (2015) of the Malaysian Ambient Air Quality Standards 2013.