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Wong: Raja Musa fires not caused by sand mining

STATE Tourism, Consumer Affairs and Environment Committee chairman Elizabeth Wong said the fires in the Raja Musa Forest Reserve were not caused by sand mining but clay mining.

Responding to a question by Lee Kim Sin (PR-Kajang), Wong said: "The clay mining company had ceased operations when the fires started. However, if the problem persists, we will revoke their licence."

To another of Lee's questions, Wong said, "Since 2009, 15 forest reserves, with a total area of about 1,978.13ha, were rehabilitated. These are the Gading, Sungai Lalang, Raja Musa, Kuala Langat Selatan, Bukit Belata, Bukit Tunggal, Serendah, Kuala Bernam, Banjar Utara, Telok Gong, Pulau Klang, Kuala Langat, Jugra, Telok Gedong, and Kuala Sepang Forest Reserves.

"The problem we face when pre-

serving peat forests is the conflict of land usage that occurs.

"The problem is also caused by poor planning of the construction of water channels.

"Aside from changing the existing ecosystem, it also creates dry conditions that can lead to fires occurring during the dry season," she said.

On preserving mangrove forests, she said they faced a different problem.

"The tides cause mangrove seeds to be buried or flushed away.

"The lack of awareness from the community has also endangered the forest due to indiscriminate dumping," Wong said.

She added, "FRIM is carrying out a study at Sungai Hj Dorani to identify the tide phenomenon.

"It is expected to help the state government in planning programmes to preserve mangrove forests."