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'Leave forest reserves alone'

Build KL Outer Ring Road around them, says deputy minister

PETALING JAYA: The four forest reserves threatened by the proposed Kuala Lumpur Outer Ring Road (KLORR) should not have any road running through them, says a deputy minister.

"The highway can be built around the forest reserve areas," said Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos Mamit after launching the International Day of Forests yesterday at the Kepong Botanic Garden.

Dr James was asked to comment on the petition by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and several other environmental NGOs to halt plans to build the KLOORR in the forest reserves.

The MNS on its website had encouraged the general public to voice their objections by Wednesday.

It said the proposed de-gazette-ment would involve 106.55ha of land from four forest reserves in Ampang, Bukit Seputeh, Ulu Gombak and Ulu Langat Forest Reserves.

Two of the forest reserves in Ampang and Ulu Gombak form part of the Selangor State Park and are important water catchment areas for the Klang Valley.

On Feb 14, the Selangor Forestry Department placed a notice in newspapers asking stakeholders in the Ulu Langat and Gombak districts to object to the proposed KLOORR within 30 days.

The coalition of the Protection of the Selangor State Park, which comprised the MNS, World Wildlife Fund - Malaysia, Save Our Sungai Selangor and Treat Every Environment Special, had been calling for a change in the

KLOORR road alignment since 2009.

Asked if it was possible for the KLOORR to be designed to avoid the forest reserves, Selangor executive council member in charge of tourism, consumer affairs and environment Elizabeth Wong said the Federal Government should not have signed the agreement with concessionaire Ahmad Zakin Resources Bhd in haste in February 2012.

"We look forward to the Federal Government's cancellation of the concession agreement," she said.

Wong said the Selangor government had recommended a different route design to avoid the incursions into the forest reserves and the state park.

The alternative route will align closer to the edges and buffer zones of the park.



Growing awareness: Lili Sahira Husin and her daughter planting a sapling during the launch of the International Day of Forests at the Kepong Botanic Garden.