

Penang DOE rejected 25 EIA reports in 2022, says state director

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GEORGE TOWN(March 13): The Penang Department of Environment (DOE) received a total of 40 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports for 27 projects to be evaluated under the Environmental Quality Order 2015 last year.

State DOE director Sharifah Zakiah Syed Sahab said of the total, 15 EIA reports or 37% had been approved involving housing projects, waste processing and disposal and industrial estates.

"While another 25 EIAs involving 12 projects were not passed due to several reasons including the EIA report being technically incomplete and not yet complying with the comments from relevant agencies, among the rejected projects were slope and quarry projects.

"For the 12 projects that were not approved, we received more than one EIA because some sent two to three reports (EIA) but all were rejected due to not meeting the specified conditions," she told reporters after officiating an environmental seminar in conjunction with Earth Day 2023 here on Monday (March 13).

She said that in order to increase the number of EIA reports being approved, consultants and developers should ensure that the EIA study complied with all the requirements set before the report is submitted to DOE for processing.

Sharifah Zakiah said that among weaknesses found in the reports submitted were a failure to take into account the requirements of policies, structure plans and land use including buffer zones.

She said that there were also incomplete reports submitted by "trial and error", where matters that have not been studied, or had yet to receive the approval of the policy of a certain party, were brought to the DOE.

"When a report is submitted without complete information and after the five-week charter is reached, it will be rejected and although it is processed for free by DOE, the preparation and re-submission of reports repeatedly only increases the cost and time for the developer and all parties involved," she said.

She said EIA is a study that has been "well-established" around the world because it is open and gives proper space to various stakeholders to give their views and DOE also takes into account the comments of technical agencies.

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