

Environmentalists protest coal terminal owned by Artalyta

The Lampung Coastal Care Community Alliance (AMPPL) has increased its protest over the construction of a terminal and coal stockpile area on the Panjang coast by PT Sumatera Bahtera Raya (PT SBR), owned by controversial businesswoman Artalyta Suryani, aka Ayin. Apart from violating Bylaw No. 10/2011 on Bandar Lampung Spatial Planning, protesters fear the terminal and stockpile area will further damage the environment on the coast around Lampung Bay.

The AMPPL, an affiliation of conservation groups including the Lampung branch of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), Sarekat Hijau Indonesia, Mitra Bentala and the Nature and Environment Lovers Family (Watala), pointed out PT SBR's presence would negatively impact community health, exacerbate socioeconomic conditions in the local community, threaten the marine ecosystem and pollute the surroundings.

"Coal stockpiling has been going on for the past month. We demand that PT SBR immediately cease this activity as it is in violation of Bandar Lampung's spatial planning bylaw. The company also does not possess an Environmental Impact Analysis (Amdal) as required according to the 2009 Law on Environmental Management and Protection," said Lampung Walhi's director, Hendrawan, who is also the AMPPL spokesman, on Wednesday.

According to Hendrawan, Artalyta's company had begun stockpiling coal despite not having an Amdal and despite the protests from various sectors in the local community. "Walhi, as a member of the Amdal Commission, was not involved in any Amdal process by PT SBR," said Hendrawan. However, PT SBR's senior civil engineer, Supani, said the location of the terminal and coal port were still within the authorized zone and that no regulation had been violated. "We would never have invested in the city without obtaining a safety assurance from the local administration and support from local residents. The port that we will build later is not specifically meant for coal; it will be a public port. Having a port here is expected to attract investors to Bandar Lampung. That is the reason why the local administration has supported our plans," said Supani.

According to the plans, PT SBR will build a terminal for its own interests (TUKS) on reclaimed land carried out by PT Bukit Alam Surya (PT BAS), another Artalyta company (currently managed by Artalyta's eldest son) along the Lampung Bay coast on Jl. Yos Sudarso, Sukaraja district in Bandar Lampung. PT BAS reclaimed dozens of hectares of coastline in the area by using material it had excavated from Camang Hill, which was subsequently converted into the upscale Alam Surya headquarters.

Bandar Lampung Mayor Herman H.N. has suspended a 150-hectare coastal reclamation project, started by PT BAS in 2002 and intended for the construction of the Bandar Lampung Waterfront City, due to mounting protests from locals. With the issuance of the 2011 spatial planning bylaw, Artalyta's chance to expand her business to the coastline were almost dashed. Article 5 of the bylaw stipulates that Jl. Yos Sudarso is earmarked as an entertainment and tourism zone, while commercial and industrial areas are to be located in Panjang, Way Lunik, Garuntang and Bumi Waras districts, with the proviso that no industrial areas should face the coast. PT SBR, however, managed to obtain a recommendation letter from the mayor, permitting the company to operate along the coast on Jl. Yos Sudarso if it met a number of requirements, such as securing a location permit, a spatial-planning site plan and an Amdal. "The letter, which was signed by Mayor Herman on May 29 this year, was issued as a basis to apply for the TUKS permit from the Transportation Ministry. However, in reality, the coal stockpile facility has already been established. Coal has been piled up for the past month at this location, right behind Sahid Hotel," said Hendrawan.

Lampung Coastal Women activist, Nurhayati, said not many people were aware that the terminal and coal stockpile area were owned by Artalyta. "We have repeatedly protested to the city council and municipal administration, but there has been no response from them. Artalyta's projects are continuing, while a number of residents who oppose the coal terminal have received threats," said Nurhayati.