



APRIL violates its new sustainability policy, continues natural forest clearance on deep peat in North Kalimantan

Samarinda, Indonesia (20/5) – NGOs in Kalimantan call on PT. Adindo Hutani Lestari (AHL), a pulpwood supplier of Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Ltd. (APRIL), to immediately stop clearance of natural forest in Tana Tidung, North Kalimantan.

GAPETA Borneo, Kalimantan Forest Monitoring NGOs (RPHK) and WWF-Indonesia East Kalimantan released a new joint report today revealing that AHL has continued to clear natural forest on protected peat after APRIL issued its Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) in January 2014. AHL cleared even High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) identified by an APRIL commissioned assessment.

“It appears that APRIL’s sustainability commitments are only on paper, but not in the forest,” said Kamiruddin, head of GAPETA Borneo. “Their deforestation and peat canal excavation should be stopped as they cause serious environmental damages including carbon emissions. Deforestation on deep peat should also be stopped because it is protected by law.”

The huge amount of carbon stored in peat soil starts to be emitted once it is drained and developed to allow natural forest clearance and develop plantation. Drained and dried peat is also vulnerable to catch fire.

“It is time for APRIL to listen to the concerns of the local stakeholders and end its clearance of natural forests and orangutan habitats in Kalimantan,” says Sulhani of RPHK. “APRIL should respect its own commitments to become sustainable and certainly not clear HCVF which themselves identified and committed to protect.”

“These findings confirm an indisputable fact that APRIL lacks seriousness in implementing their sustainable commitments. We are increasingly questioning their SFMP,” says Syachraini from WWF-Indonesia. “Not only APRIL’s questionable HCV assessment allowed a large portion of the identified HCVFs to be cleared, but also even the small HCVF recommended to be protected was cleared.”

WWF urged APRIL to strictly maintain the obedience of their Sustainable Forest Management Policy (SFMP), particularly by not cutting forests that has identified as HCV areas.

NGOs have been criticizing exactly the same failures in HCVF protection by many APRIL suppliers and this is why APRIL lost its FSC Chain of Custody certificate in 2010. WWF calls on APRIL to immediately stop all natural forest clearance and peat development activities and first improve its SFMP to no longer allow this behavior.

AHL’s Sesayap Sector concession still has a large area of good natural forest, much of it on deep peat. The NGO coalition urges RGE/APRIL to immediately start a forest clearance moratorium in all APRIL suppliers’ concessions, even if APRIL had commissioned HCV assessments already. NGOs also called on APRIL to have proper HCV assessments conducted and peer-reviewed by the HCV Resources Network and also have independent HCS and peat assessments conducted to ensure that the company causes no further deforestation.

GAPETA Borneo, RPHK including WWF-Indonesia call on the pulp and paper buyers not to do business with RGE/APRIL before they improve its sustainability forest management plan and the implementation is verified by a credible independent third party audit.

The alliance of NGOs in East, North and West Kalimantan will continue to monitor the performance of APRIL and associated companies and inform the stakeholders.

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Note to Editors:

- The report of “Natural Forest Clearance Continues on Deep Peat in APRIL Supplier Concession” can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/aprilkaltaraeng>.

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