



## KERATAN AKHBAR

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## SAM concerned over Mount Erskine hill-cutting works

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**GEORGE TOWN:** Earthworks and hill-cutting carried out along steep slopes in Mount Erskine have raised concerns among nearby residents and even Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM).

With the present rainy season, SAM president Meenakshi Raman feared soil erosion could lead to landslides in the area.

She said concerned residents alerted them to the slope-clearing near the Mont Residence apartments in Tanjung Tokong.

"We understand that a significant part of the hill-cutting involves slopes above 76.2m with a gradient exceeding 25°.

"We were told that last year, NGO Penang Hills Watch (PHW) had alerted the state authorities and the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) on the hill-cutting activities.

"We understand that PHW were told that mitigation works were being carried out at the site, which is on land belonging to the state government.

"We urge the state authority and MBPP to explain these mitigation works, and also the reason behind



such steep slopes being cut and cleared.

"The state policy under the Penang Structure Plan is to protect hill lands, and does not allow earthworks on lands above 76.2m or slopes exceeding a 25° gradient."

she said.

Meenakshi said they were worried of landslide disasters, such as those that happened at the construction sites of a high-rise apartment block in Tanjung Bungah in 2017 and Bukit Kukus in Paya

Terubong last year, killing 20 workers in total.

State public works, utilities and flood mitigation committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari said the earthworks were carried out in compliance with the requirements

### Precarious project:

Earthwork and hill-cutting being carried out on very steep slopes close to the Mont Residence apartment at Mount Erskine in Tanjung Tokong, Penang.

of a construction project.

"The pictures shared online were actually showing a road.

"The developer is building a road there in compliance with the building project.

"Meanwhile, the mitigation works for Mont Residence are a different thing," he said.

Kebun Bungah assemblyman Jason Ong said he would monitor the situation to ensure that the developer complies with all conditions imposed by the council.

When contacted, the MBPP mayor's office said they would issue a statement on the matter soon.

Since 2016, Penang has been severely struck by monsoon rains, landslides and flash floods in October and November.

A major landslide near the Tropical Spice Garden cut off access to Teluk Bahang after five hours of rain in November 2016.

In October 2017, a temporary slope at the construction site of a high-rise apartment block in Tanjung Bungah collapsed, killing 11 workers.

In October last year, a landslide caused 12 containers on a slope to crash down and kill nine foreign workers.