

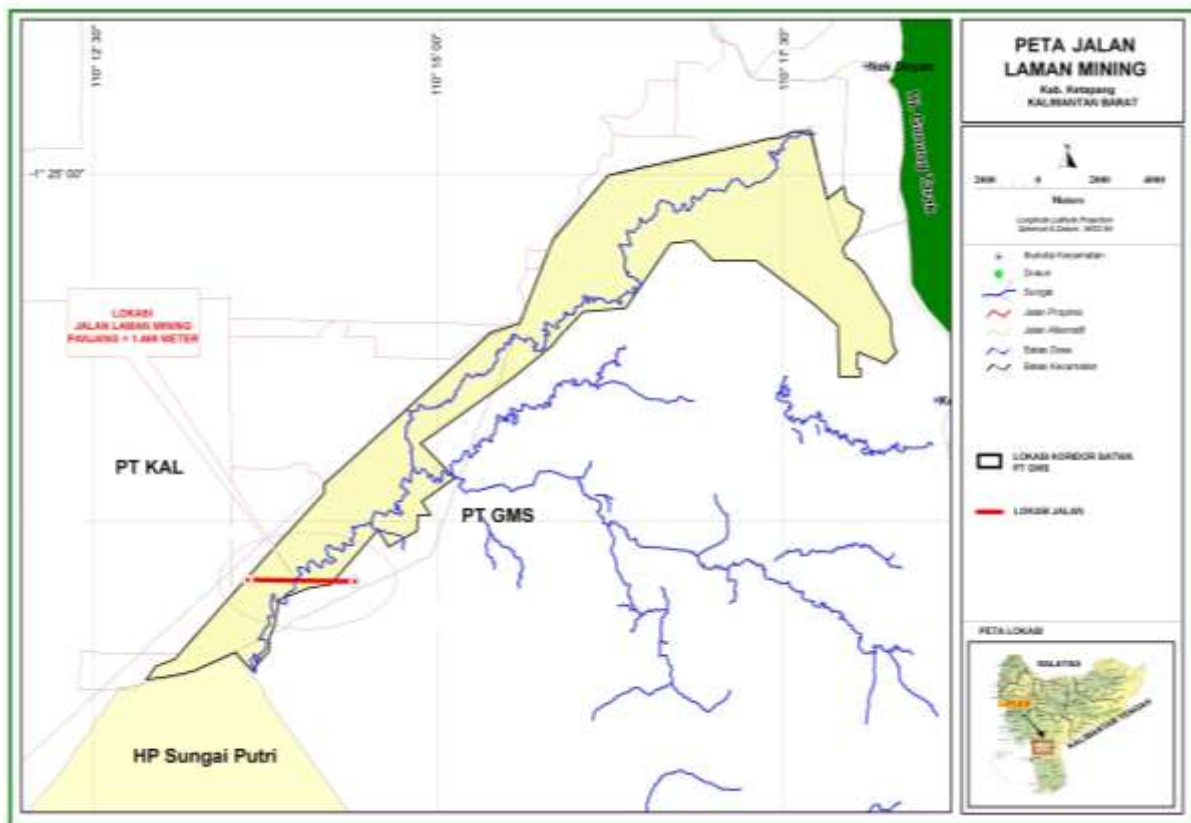


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NEWS RELEASE

“KAWASAN EKOSISTEM ESENSIAL” AREAS CLEARED FOR ROAD DEVELOPMENT

Jakarta, 3 August 2018 – It is sad and disheartening to report that a road has been cut across the Bumitama Biodiversity and Community Project (“BBCP”) consisting of HCV and HCS, which forms the last remaining wildlife migration corridor between the Sungai Putri peat swamp forest and Gunung Tarak Protected Forest. This happened despite the area being protected as *Kawasan Ekosistem Esensial* (“KEE”) by the decision of the Governor of West Kalimantan, forming a critical part of the KEE Landscape called Orangutan Corridor Sungai Putri – Gunung Tarak – Gunung Palung.



This BBCP conservation area inside Bumitama’s PT Gemilang Makmur Subur overlaps with the permit of a bauxite mining company called PT Laman Mining. Indonesian regulations grant mining licenses priority over permits of plantation companies, however the protection status of KEE should have ensured that these areas would not be zoned for development. Clearing of a road across this HCV area by PT Laman Mining throws the success of the whole project into doubt.



What is more, the 1.5 km long and 30 meters wide mining road also cuts through the river Kuala Tolak. This river, which flows westwards through the corridor from the Gunung Tarak, supplies water to the peat swamp forest of Sungai Putri. Obstructing the river may have a negative offsite impact for the 30,000 ha of High Carbon Stock forest containing peat dome. Peat soils are very vulnerable and easily ignite when dried, emitting huge amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Blocking the river and draining parts of this area can have catastrophic knock-on effect for the whole landscape. Additionally, opening a new road will draw more illegal loggers into the area, resulting in increased forest degradation and destruction of one of the largest remaining populations of the Bornean orangutan.



Despite the adversity, Bumitama is determined to engage and work together with our project partners and other stakeholders on finding the best way to continue the BBCP project and avoid any further clearance of forest.

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