

Developers against EIA proposal for all projects

STAR 9/6/06
Friday.

PUTRAJAYA: The proposal that developers conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for all projects irrespective of size and development is an "overreaction".

Real Estate and Housing Developers Association (Rehda) president Datuk Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip said it would add to the financial costs incurred by the

industry.

"There will be more bureaucratic processes, financial costs and other additional costs," he said, adding that EIAs for all projects irrespective of size should only be carried out for environmentally-sensitive areas.

"Such a proposal will also defeat the Government's effort in wanting to

improve its public delivery system.

"Only large developments of 50ha or more should have EIAs."

This was because development in areas with proper infrastructure, or non-sensitive areas such as those on flat land with good soil conditions, did not contribute to environmental damage, he added.

He was commenting on a statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Tuesday to not allow developers to get away with not conducting EIAs by breaking their projects into smaller parcels.

Under the law, only projects of 50ha or more are required to have an EIA. It was also suggested that developers

and consultants who misrepresented EIA facts be given a mandatory jail term if convicted.

Ng said Rehda was of the opinion that existing laws and regulations, including the Environmental Quality Act, should be tightened as environmental damage was a serious issue.