

PRESS STATEMENT



Reef Check
MALAYSIA

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Reef Check Malaysia Fully Supports the Decision to Cancel the Construction of the New Tioman Airport

Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) was pleased to hear the announcement by the Government to not proceed with the construction of the airport on Tioman Island, a decision the Cabinet made after the Technical Committee meeting on the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA).

RCM applauds the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change's (NRECC) stand on their commitment to preserve and conserve natural resources and the environment in a responsible manner.

The rejection of the proposal to construct a new airport on Tioman Island is a huge victory for the environment and biodiversity, not only on Tioman Island but in Malaysia as a whole. It also means the local community's livelihood on Tioman Island will not be negatively affected as its economy recovers from the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The concerns voiced by the public regarding the reclamation of protected marine areas that will destroy coral reefs, which are important habitats for various marine life, made an impact. RCM expresses gratitude to the public; a total of 1,412 people who have commented on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) from 21 June to 4 August 2023, over 26,000 people who have signed the petition to oppose the construction of the new Tioman Airport on Change.org, the SmallTownsMy team for producing awareness videos which showcase the local islanders' voices and impacts of the construction, the Youths United For Earth (YUFE) for the awareness videos, the various local and international media partners for covering the story and bringing light to the situation, and the Reef Check Foundation headquarters and network for standing in solidarity with it.

RCM would also like to express its deep gratitude to the government agencies for making the right decision, the scientists for lending their expertise and providing feedback on the EIA, and to all the NGOs and countless people for sharing the stories and raising awareness.

Most importantly, RCM thanks the local community of Tioman Island for standing strong and fighting for the protection of their island and its biodiversity.

RCM hopes this will be the final and conclusive decision on any proposal to construct a new airport on Tioman Island to ensure the protection of Malaysia's environment and biodiversity. Reef Check Malaysia fully supports this decision and looks forward to working with the relevant authorities to ensure sustainable tourism development, both on Tioman and throughout Malaysia.