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TEKNOLOGI DAN INOVASI
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



TARIKH	3 MARCH 2026 (SELASA)	SURATKHABAR	BH / UM / NST / TS / HM / KOSMO
TAJUK ARTIKEL	NO MORE RADIOACTIVE WASTE		
M/S	4 (NATION)	KATA KUNCI	RARE EARTHS, WASTE
BIDANG	LYNAS	PROCESSING	

No more radioactive waste

Rare earths firm Lynas gets 10-year licence under strict terms

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KUALA LUMPUR: Lynas Malaysia has secured a 10-year licence extension for its rare earths plant in Gebeng, Pahang, as long as it ceases the production of residue that is classified as “radioactive” by 2031.

The condition of the extension also stated that no new permanent disposal facility (PDF) for low-level radioactive waste will be built following the completion of the current PDF that is still under construction.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Chang Lih Kang (*pic*) said the licence under the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 (Act 304) has been renewed from March 3, 2026, to March 2, 2036, subject to stricter terms and a comprehensive review after the first five years.

“The generation of Water Leach Purification (WLP) residue will be stopped after the first five years, which is until 2031.

“Whatever WLP is produced before or within that five-year period must be neutralised into waste that is no longer radioactive, to below one becquerel per gramme (1 Bq/g). I think this is a positive move that will make our 2031 goal achievable,” Chang told reporters in Parliament yesterday.

The capping of PDFs also highlights the government’s commitment to the rakyat and foreign investors that as long as they comply with the licence conditions, they can continue to operate.

In an earlier statement yesterday, the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry said the move was in line with the government’s stand that there should be no accumulation of radioactive residue in the country.

Chang said WLP generated up to 2031 will be placed in the existing PDF, which is already 75% completed, and will be fully completed by the end of this year, while

also confirming that Lynas is not required to ship the accumulated residue out of Malaysia.

Beyond waste and safety, the renewed licence also tightens Lynas’ obligations on research and development (R&D).

In a Facebook post, he said a R&D project completed in 2025 had shown “very promising results” in extracting thorium from

WLP at laboratory scale, though he noted that scaling any breakthrough from lab to industrial level typically takes seven to 10 years.

“We are giving Lynas five years to retrofit their equipment and scale up operations. This is a firm but accelerated timeline, and they have committed to meeting it,” he said, stressing that all WLP produced between 2026 and 2031 must be

treated to below 1 Bq/g to that they can be classified as scheduled waste, rather than radioactive waste.

Chang said the operating licence will be subject to a formal review after the first five years to ensure the company meets its obligations.

He said Lynas must carry successful R&D results from the laboratory to commercial and industrial application, and strengthen collaboration with local research institutions and industry players.

The existing requirement for 1% of the company’s annual gross sales to be set aside for R&D is maintained under the new licence.

Chang added that his ministry and the Atomic Energy Department will carry out strict monitoring and continuous enforcement to ensure full compliance with all licensing conditions, including radiation safety, environmental protection, and residue management, while also recognising the strategic importance of the rare earths industry to the national economy.

To strengthen transparency and public confidence, the ministry and the Atomic Energy Department are also providing open access to environmental radiation data via the Environmental Radiation

Conditions for the extension of Lynas Malaysia's operating license



- 1) No new permanent disposal facility for water leach purification residue other than the current one
- 2) Lynas must cease producing residue that can be classified as “radioactive” under Act 304 by 2031
- 3) Such residue must be treated so that it can be safely handled as any other scheduled waste
- 4) The 10-year extension is subject to review by 2031
- 5) One percent of annual gross sales will be set aside for R&D in collaboration with local institutions so that the residue can be reused in other applications.

TheStar graphics

Monitoring System (irms.atom.gov.my).

In a statement yesterday, Lynas Rare Earths CEO and managing director Amanda Lacaze thanked the government for the operational certainty.

“Lynas welcomes the longer licence term, which provides greater investment certainty for Lynas and our rare earths supply chain partners and customers.”

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