



NEA serves haze notices on 10 Singapore-based firms for the first time on 23 October

Description

The National Environment Agency (NEA) served notices under the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act (THPA) on 10 Singapore-registered companies on Friday (23 October). CNA and The Straits Times both reported it as the first time NEA has used the law against firms based here. The companies are in the palm oil or forestry business and own land concessions in Indonesia, or have related companies that do.



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Disease

NEA's PSI forecast for Saturday sits at 90 to 140, straddling the unhealthy band.
Screenshot: haze.gov.sg, NEA

The 10 companies

The notices went to:

- Asia Pulp & Paper Company
- Asia Pulp & Paper Company (China)
- Bumitama Agri
- Golden Agri International
- First Resources
- Indofood Agri Resources
- Kencana Agri
- TSH Global Plantation
- TSH Oversea
- Wilmar International

Five of them are listed on the Singapore Exchange, The Straits Times reported.

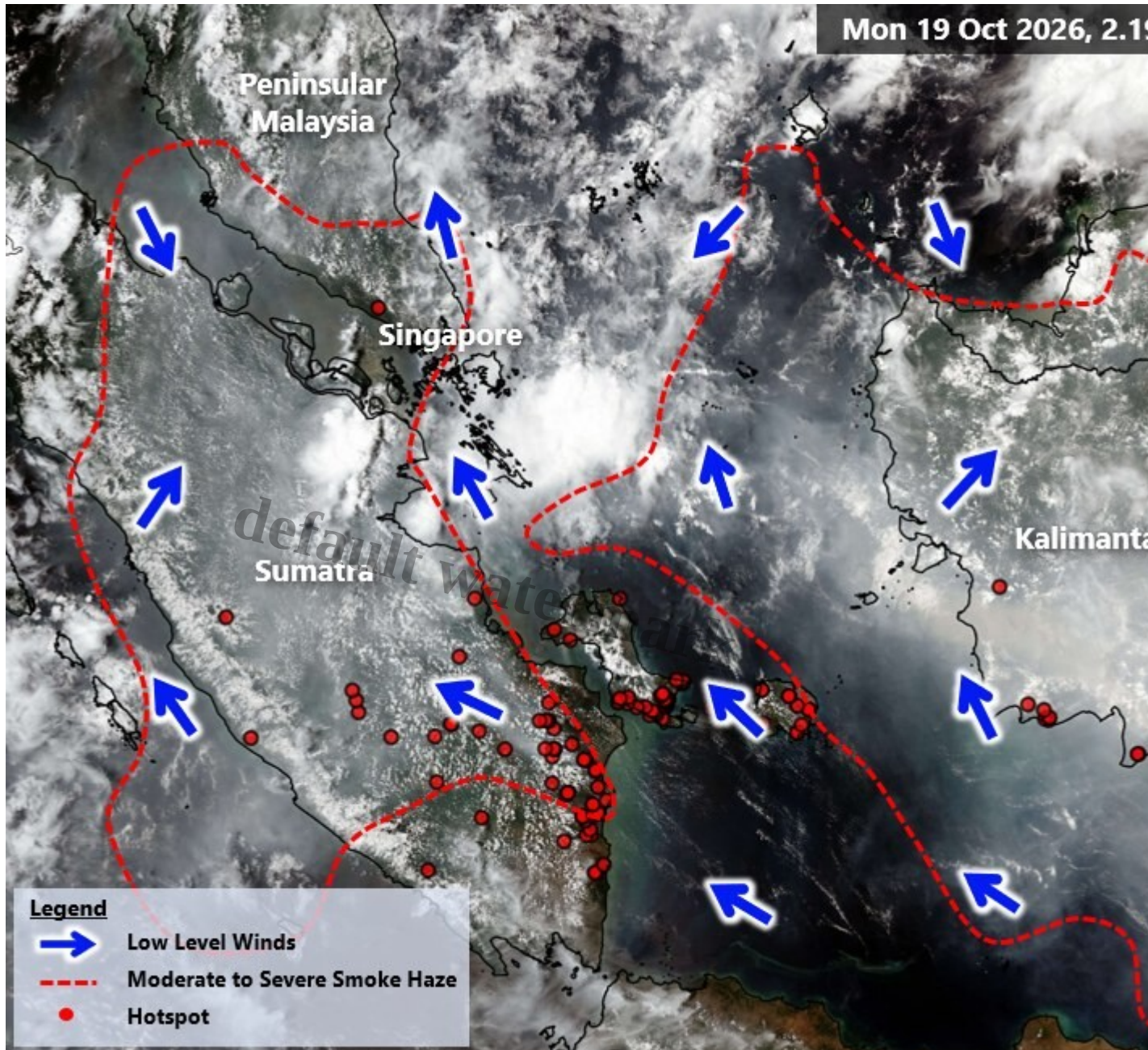
What the notices ask for

The notices fall under Section 10 of the THPA. Each firm must hand NEA documents and information on its links with associated companies in Singapore and Indonesia, where its land concessions are, and what it did to prevent or fight fires during the dry season.

These notices carry teeth. Under Section 10, representatives of a firm that does not comply face a fine of up to S\$5,000, up to a month in jail, or both, The Straits Times reported.

The Indonesian firms already on notice

On 16 and 19 October, NEA sent preventive measure notices under Section 9 of the THPA to 10 companies in Indonesia over fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Those notices require the firms to deploy firefighters, stop any burning and send NEA a plan to put the fires out. NEA is now also asking those 10 firms for documents on the fires in their concessions and their links to companies in Singapore.



Smoke haze from Sumatra and Kalimantan on 19 October. Image: Meteorological Service Singapore

Grace Fu's line

Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu called the move an important next step in establishing the facts, in a Facebook post on Friday. "Whether companies are based overseas or registered here in Singapore, we will follow the evidence and take errant companies to task where the evidence supports it," she wrote.

A specialist panel joins in

The Ministry of Law on Friday set up a Specialist Panel of law, audit and investigative firms to look into companies' operations, corporate links and supply chains, with Davinder Singh Chambers appointed to advise the Government on coordinating that work. Findings go to the relevant agencies and the Attorney-General's Chambers. The Monetary Authority of Singapore and NEA are following up separately, with more details due next week.

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