



RIMBAWATCH

PRESS RELEASE

RIMBAWATCH FILES FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND CLIMATE LITIGATION CASE IN MALAYSIA

30 December 2025 - Last week, RimbaWatch filed, through our solicitors Thurairaj T.Kumar and Associates, Malaysia's first ever of-its-kind climate litigation case in the Malaysian courts. This suit seeks to enforce the government's statutory duty to investigate and address fossil fuel-related advertising which we believe potentially constitutes greenwashing.

On the 20th of September 2025, RimbaWatch filed a formal complaint via the relevant channels to both the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost Of Living Affairs (KPDN) **and** the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES). This complaint concerns a fossil fuel firm's current marketing of a product, which is derived from fossil fuels, as "carbon neutral" - a claim which we allege is misleading. We filed the complaint to these ministries as KPDN represents the agency serving the Minister appointed to protect consumers whilst NRES represents the agency serving the Minister appointed to prevent pollution and protect the environment. We suggest that, if indeed these claims are misleading as we believe, they could harm both consumer protection and climate protection interests.

On the 30th of September 2025, we received a reply from the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost Of Living Affairs, explaining that such a complaint was out of their jurisdiction and that we should instead make our complaint to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability.¹

On the same day, we received a reply from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability stating that it was out of their jurisdiction and that we should instead make our complaint to the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost Of Living Affairs.²

We believe that the decision by both Ministries suggesting that such complaints are out of their jurisdiction is incorrect. The practical effect of these decisions is that there is seemingly no government agency empowered to investigate potentially misleading advertising or marketing claims related to climate protection. Therefore, we have filed a judicial review challenging both these decisions.

In the relevant documents pertaining to the claim, for what we believe is the first time in Malaysia, we rely in part on the [International Court of Justice's \(ICJ\) Climate Change Advisory Opinion from July 23, 2025](#) which establishes that the standard of due diligence required of states in protecting the climate system is "*stringent*" and demands that

¹ See Notes to Editor

² See Notes to Editor

states put in place a “*national system, including legislation, administrative procedures and an enforcement mechanism necessary to regulate the activities in question*”, and exercise “*adequate vigilance*” to make such a system function efficiently (*Climate Change Advisory Opinion*, [138] and [281]).

As such, we believe a refusal to investigate credible allegations of greenwashing represents a failure to exercise the “adequate vigilance” required under this standard. The ICJ emphasized that due diligence requires “*not only the adoption of appropriate rules and measures, but also a certain level of vigilance in their enforcement*”, given the seriousness of climate change threats (*Climate Change Advisory Opinion*, [138]).

Separately, RimbaWatch is concerned over the increasing trend of corporate greenwashing across Southeast Asia, which, as a [United Nation \(UN\) High-Level Expert Group](#) acknowledges, misleadingly portrays companies or other entities as doing more to protect the environment than they actually are, promotes false solutions to addressing climate change, and which delays concrete and credible climate action. Malaysia, unlike regional counterparts such as [Singapore](#), has yet to develop regulatory guidance on greenwashing, nor have they acted proactively to address misleading claims currently being made. We are hopeful that this suit will act as a wake-up call to the Malaysian authorities to address greenwashing, thus improving alignment between corporate actions and Malaysia’s national climate and developmental priorities.

About RimbaWatch

RimbaWatch is an environmental think-tank conducting research and advocacy on climate-related issues in Maritime Southeast Asia.

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Notes to Editor

Copies of responses from both ministries are available at this [link](#). These responses have been edited to remove personal identifying information.

The case numbers are as follows:

- a) KLHC SUIT NO.: WA-25-435-12/2025 - RIMBAWATCH -V- MOE
- b) KLHC SUIT NO.: WA-25-436-12/2025 - RIMBAWATCH -V- KPDN

Court documents can be accessed at this [link](#). For further information on how to access these documents, refer to the guide [here](#). There is a hearing date for the RimbaWatch v MoE suit on the 21st of Jan.

This press release contains opinions and commentary based on publicly available information believed to be accurate at the time of publication. All statements are made in good faith and are not intended to misrepresent facts or defame any individual or entity.