



APRIL reports return of forest fires to Indonesia

PANGKALAN KERINCI JUN. 23 2014 –

Pulp-paper maker fighting 220-hectare blaze near supplier concession



Fire at community land in Rupert, Riau

Asia's second-largest pulp and paper manufacturer reported a fire burning 500 meters from a wood supply partner's plantation on Rupert, an island just off the coast of Sumatra. APRIL said it has dispatched a helicopter and 15 firefighters to help Indonesian officials combat the 220-hectare blaze. According to a report to police, villagers ignited the blaze while using fire to clear land for planting.

"Fires are a menace to public health and our business," said APRIL President Director Kusnan Rahmin. "We will contribute all available resources to help beat back the threat."

The company said no fires have been detected inside APRIL concessions. But it added that its men and equipment will continue to fight blazes that erupt nearby to protect APRIL plantations or those of its suppliers.

APRIL said it has re-opened a firefighting command center at the company's mill complex in Riau Province. From there, the company will direct a round-the-clock fire response that includes:

- Ground and air surveillance;
- Daily satellite monitoring;
- Increased water storage in canals and reservoirs;
- 700 trained firefighters;
- Three firefighting helicopters.

APRIL said it continues a 20-year-old company ban on burning in its forest concessions. It added that it will report every fire in or near the concessions to police.

Hundreds of illegally started blazes rage in the forests of Sumatra every dry season. The fires are a quick, inexpensive way to clear land for agriculture. But they create health hazards from Indonesia to Malaysia and Singapore by choking the skies with smoke.

Fires jeopardize companies such as APRIL which produce mill wood on Sumatran plantations. Most fires start on unmanaged land outside of licensed forest concessions. They spread into managed plantations fueled by wind and dry vegetation.

About APRIL:

Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (APRIL) is a leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper with manufacturing operations in Kerinci, Riau Province, Indonesia. APRIL has been a pioneer in implementing sustainability practices in the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia.

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