Environmental Improvement Policy through the obligation of post-tin mining reclamation in the islands of Bangka Belitung

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Environmental Improvement Policy through the obligation of post-tin mining reclamation in the islands of Bangka Belitung

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Abstract. Reclamation obligation is one way to ensure environmentally sound mining activities. Nevertheless, Bangka Belitung islands, which have been excavated for tin since 3 centuries ago, leave environmental problems behind due to poorly implemented reclamation obligations. Generally, Law Number 4 of 2009 on Minerals and Coal threatens this negligence with administrative sanctions such as written warnings, partial or complete suspension of permits, and even revocation. However, after almost 10 years in effect, these punishments haveyet to be very effective in promotting reclamation optimization, including in Bangka Belitung. Therefore, a criminalization policy was implemented through the amendment of Law Number3 of 2020 for the act of failure to perform reclamation and/or post-mining obligations and for not placing reclamation guarantees and/or post-mining guarantees with the punishment of imprisonment, fines, and additional criminal charges. Consequently, this normative study focuses on criminalization and its conditions, alongside the formulation of sanctions andpunishments as part of criminal law policies. The formulation stage has a strategic role becauseit is the basis and initial indicator for judicial and executive policy implementation effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Tin is the longest-mined material in Indonesia, whose history is traceable to the times of the Sriwijaya kingdom, the Dutch VOC, the British, the Dutch East Indies Government, Japanese occupations, and Indonesian Independence [1]. Jariq Cornelis Mollema stated that tin mining started in ancient times, evidenced by several discoveries of ceramic pieces and human tools at a depth of 8 feet, especially on Belitung Island [2].

After more than three centuries of serving the world, Bangka Belitung is a portrait of the country's failure to manage tin resources, marked by adverse impacts, including environmental problems [3, 4]. The practice of coming, digging, and going has become a typical portrait of mining closures in Indonesia [5]. For instance, PT Timah Tbk, which dominated the onshore Mining Business Permit (IUP), had an area of 16,765.49 hectares from 1992-2020, with a reclamation realization of 15,329.85 hectares. This means that 1,435.64 hectares have yet to be reclaimed [6].

Although various laws and technical rules have regulated the reclamation obligation, many factors influence the implementation, making it ineffective. One of these factors is the imposition of

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1175 (2023) 012021

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administrative sanctions, which have been incapable of forcing mining companies to fulfill their reclamation obligations [7]. Therefore, the criminalization policy is an essential and strategic issue for violations of reclamation obligations to facilitate the efforts of bringing environmentally sound mining and the dream of sustainable development into reality. This policy is accommodated in the Mineral and Coal Law amendments of 2020 and will be the focus of this study. The major issues discussed herein are the nature of shifting from administrative sanctions to criminalization and the extent to which the formulation of criminal acts and the threat of criminal sanctions are effective in arresting companies who fail to perform their reclamation obligations in Bangka Belitung.

Previous research on reclamation policies has been done as published in a journal in 2022 entitled Study on the Implementation of Ex-Coal Mining Land Reclamation Policies Based on The Ministerial Decree of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) No. 1827K/30/MEM/2018 [8]. However, the study focuses on technical policies only. In addition, several other studies also mainly discussed the implementation of reclamation in several companies. Therefore, we can say that this research paper brings up a novelty.

2. Methodology

This is normative legal research using a statutory approach [9], and the positive law inventory was implemented by comprehensively identifying, correcting, and organizing norms. The main data source uses secondary data comprising primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials [10].

Formulation theories and criminalization signs were the basis for reviewing the criminalization policy of failing to fulfill reclamation obligations stipulated in the criminal provisions of Law Number 3 of 2020 concerning Minerals and Coal.

3. Results and Discussion

Politics of environmental law and regulations concerning tin mining in Bangka Belitung from central to regional levels have revealed suboptimal results in promoting post-mining and reclamation obligations [11,12]. At the same time, ecological issues have always been strategic in the development planning documents to overcome environmental damages due to mining activities in all regencies and cities in the Bangka Belitung Islands [13].

3.1. Continued Dominance of Administrative Policy

The Mineral and Coal Law Number 4 of 2009 regulates the threat of administrative sanctions for mining permit holders who fail to fulfill reclamation obligations. These may be given through written warnings, temporary suspension of some or all exploration activities or production operations, and the revocation of Mining Business Permits (IUP), People Mining Permit (IPR), or Special Mining Business Permit (IUPK). However, for more than 10 years, the obligations have yet to be maximized, leading to the application of a criminalization approach through Law Number 3 of 2020 to materialize the goal of better environmental management.

However, if we look closer, the shift from the policy of administrative sanctions to criminalization is not very significant. The regulation in Article 96, which requires the management and monitoring of the mining environment including reclamation and post-mining obligations, has remained the same, as the available sanctions are still administrative. Similarly, the obligations stipulated in Article 99 paragraphs (1), (3), and (4) are still subject to administrative sanctions. These obligations include preparing and submitting reclamation and post-mining plans, fulfilling the balance between the land tobe cleared and that already reclaimed, and managing the final ex-mining pit with the most expansive limit, according to legislative provisions.

Also, the absence of sanctions for overlooking Article 99 paragraph (2) regarding the obligation to implement reclamation and post-mining obligations based on land designation raises questions. Suppose the interpretation falls within the qualifications of Article 161B, which is failure to implement reclamation or post-mining obligations. In that case, it is undoubtedly incorrect because this provision applies to revoked IUP/IUPK. Meanwhile, Article 99 paragraph (2) relates to the

1175 (2023) 012021

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context of reclamation by active IUP/IUPK holders. Furthermore, the obligations to provide and place the guarantee funds referred to in Article 100 paragraph (1) are unchanged and remain subject to administrative sanctions only, although the act falls within the qualification in Article 161B, which is punishable as a criminal offense. Therefore, there is one act that is threatened with multiple sanctions. Lawmakers seem unable to prioritize which approach is more effective.

3.2. Criminalization of Former IUP/IUPK Holders

Acts that are criminalized in the amendments to the mineral and coal laws as regulated in the criminal provisions of Article 161B are available in Table 1 below.

Additional Penalties Subject Elements of Act **Basic Penalty** Former or Fail to perform: Imprisonment for a Payment of funds is required revoked IUP or (a) Reclamation and maximum of 5 years and a implement the IUPK holders Post-mining fine of not more than IDR Reclamation and Postobligations; 100,000,000,000.00 mining obligations (b) Placement of guarantee funds

Table 1. Criminalization Formulation in Article 161B

In addition to the additional penalties above, Article 164 also provides an additional alternative punishment for the perpetrators of violation of Article No. 161B in the forms of criminal confiscation of goods used in committing a crime, deprivation of profits derived from criminal acts, and/or the obligation to pay the costs incurred as a result of the crime.

Based on Table 1, imprisonment or fines are only applicable to former permit holders who remain fail to perform their reclamation and post-mining obligations or place guarantee funds after the revocation or expiration of their IUP/IUPK. In contrast, failure to fulfill reclamation obligations when the IUP/IUPK is still active will only receive administrative sanctions. Whereas according to the definition of reclamation stated in the general provisions, it is part of the obligations that must be performed throughout the mining business. The criminalization policy, however, only applies to former IUP/IUPK holders.

The lawmakers formulate this crime only to provide criminal sanctions against former IUP/IUPK holders, not active IUP/IUPK holders. Meanwhile, to realize environmentally sound mining, we really hope that environmental improvements accompany the tin exploitation in Bangka Belitung through various alternative reclamation activities. However, the reclamation obligations for active IUP/IUPK are not optimally implemented; hence there should be a more assertive approach through a criminalization policy and not just the application of administrative sanctions.

The community hates criminalization criteria in the form of such acts because it causes harm and brings in victims. Therefore, a balance between criminalization costs and the achieved results, without burdening law enforcement and endangering the community [14], has been fulfilled for active IUP/IUPK holders who do not perform their reclamation obligation to receive threats of criminal punishment.

3.3. The Bangka Belitung Mandatory Reclamation

Fulfilling the reclamation obligation in Bangka Belitung due to tin mining remains a big task, and data shows that thousands of hectares of cleared lands still need to be reclaimed. Therefore, although administrative sanctions dominate the latest regulations, the law is expected to be enforced in a strict, non-selective, and sustainable manner. Administrative sanctions generally comprise written warnings, fines, temporary suspension of some or all the activities, and the revocation of IUP, IUPK, IPR, SIPB, or IUP for Sales. Nevertheless, strict implementation of these sanctions will be an effective preventive measure for forcing reclamation to be performed. In addition, law enforcers should impose maximum basic and additional penalties as a form of repressive effort for violators of Article 161B.

1175 (2023) 012021

doi:10.1088/1755-1315/1175/1/012021

4. Conclusions

The administrative sanction approach, in fact, still dominates the new policy against failure to fulfill reclamation obligations. Meanwhile, the criminalization policy only targets former IUP/IUPK holders who refuse to perform their reclamation and post-mining obligations or place guarantee funds. This policy will impact the fulfillment of tin mining reclamation obligations in Bangka Belitung, which are still not entirely fulfilled so far. Furthermore, the administrative sanctions law, which is still a priority and believed to be an effective weapon to force reclamation obligation, must be firmly and consistently enforced by the central and regional governments. Finally, the existing criminalization policy may be the last resort to force the implementation of reclamation.

Acknowledgments

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1175 (2023) 012021

doi:10.1088/1755-1315/1175/1/012021

Perspective of Regional Development in Bangka Belitung E3S Web of Conferences 241 pp 1-4

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◆ Previous issue Next issue ▶

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