

Malaysia

Penang Umno asks if water tariffs will also rise

BY OPALYN MOK
APRIL 27, 2017



Umno assemblyman Datuk Muhammad Farid Saad demands to know the types of water conservation programmes the Penang government has conducted. — Picture by KE Ooi

GEORGE TOWN, April 27 — Umno today demanded to know if the increased water conservation surcharge (WCS) is a precursor to higher water tariffs in Penang.

Umno assemblyman Datuk Muhammad Farid Saad also demanded to know the types of water conservation programmes the state government had conducted to encourage and educate consumers to conserve water.

“Will the water conservation surcharge be increased periodically if with this increase, they still fail to cut down water consumption by consumers?” he asked in a statement issued today.

“I hope the state government will not use the excuse of high water consumption by only 25 per cent of consumers in Penang as an excuse to increase the domestic water tariff,” he said.

He accused the state government of profiting by imposing raw water charges on Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) for water pumped from the Sungai Muda, and that it appeared to be run as a profit-oriented entity.

Last week, PBAPP announced the increase in WCS from 48 cents to RM1 per 1,000 litre. The charge applies to consumers using over 35,000 litres of water per month. The WCS applies to the next 1,000 litre after 35,000 litres.

Today, PBAPP called a press conference to again clarify that there was no increase in domestic water tariff.

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa pointed out that all trade water consumers and 75 per cent of domestic water consumers are not affected.

Jaseni said they had to increase the WCS to cut down high domestic consumption, which is the highest in Malaysia at 286 l/c/d compared to the national average of 209 l/c/d.

Jaseni said Penang's domestic water tariffs are still the lowest in Malaysia at only 32 cents per 1,000 litres for the first 35,000 liters per month as compared to the national average of 70 cents per 1,000 litres.

“Last year, PBAPP's domestic water subsidy to maintain this people-friendly tariff amounted to RM91 million,” he said, which he also cited as a reason for increasing the WCS.

“If we do not do anything now, the subsidy will increase in 2017,” he said.