

Water transfer scheme must start now for northern region, says PBAPP CEO

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PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa speaks to reporters during the press conference in George Town January 15, 2019. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

GEORGE TOWN, Aug 28 — Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) today urged Putrajaya to implement the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) as soon as possible to ensure water security for northern states.

PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said SPRWTS must be commissioned by 2025 so that there will not be water rationing in Penang.

“When it is implemented, SPRWTS will also mitigate Penang’s risks of water crisis in this age of climate change when the duration and intensity of dry weather spells are becoming more unpredictable,” he said in a statement issued today.

Jaseni urged Putrajaya, through the Finance Ministry’s Public Private Partnership Unit (Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta or UKAS), to act “promptly and decisively” to initiate implementation of SPRWTS.

“The original specified timeline for the implementation of SPRWTS is six years; and 2025 is exactly six years away,” he said.

Jaseni said Penang needs SPRWTS urgently because Sungai Muda, the primary raw water resource for Kedah and Penang, may only reliably meet both states’ raw water needs until 2025.

He said this was based on findings stated in the independent “Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until Year 2050” that was commissioned by PBAPP in 2009.

He said the study had proposed the implementation of SPRWTS to tap a second major raw water resource for Penang.

He said 80 per cent of Penang's raw water is currently from Sungai Muda.

"In 2018, PBAPP produced 1,073 million litres per day (MLD) of treated water per day by extracting raw water from Sungai Muda and other smaller raw water resources in Penang," Jaseni said.

He said Penang's water demand is projected to reach 1,483 MLD by 2030; 1,696 MLD by 2040 and 1,884 MLD by 2050.

"It is not possible for PBAPP to abstract sufficient raw water from Sungai Muda to address such future water demand."

He said Penang has been pursuing the implementation of SPRWTS since 2011 as it will benefit not only Penang but also North Perak.

He said the recent announcements by Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng that UKAS will carry out a detailed assessment of the project was long awaited and welcomed.

"PBAPP would like to thank the Minister for making a long-awaited announcement on a key water supply project that will benefit two states: Perak and Penang in the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER)," he said.