

Penang needs to source raw water from Sungai Perak by 2025



Penang needs to tap a second major raw water resource urgently. - NSTP/MIKAIL ONG

By **Audrey Dermawan**
August 28, 2019 @ 2:14pm

GEORGE TOWN: Penang needs to tap a second major raw water resource urgently.

This, as Sungai Muda, the primary raw water resource for Kedah and Penang, may only be able to meet both states' raw water needs until 2025.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the state government and the corporation were seeking to commission the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) by 2025.

The finding was revealed in the independent "Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until Year 2050" which was commissioned by PBAPP back in 2009.

The study proposed the implementation SPRWTS to tap a second major raw water resource for Penang.

Jaseni said Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, during a visit to the state last weekend, had said that the SPRWTS would be evaluated in collaboration with the public and private sectors, to be conducted through an open tender proposal.

Lim had also said the ministry's Public Private Partnership Unit (Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta or UKAS) would carry out a detailed assessment of the project.

"Make no mistake, Penang needs the SPRWTS to ensure that it has sufficient water to realise its Vision 2030 aspirations of becoming a 'family-focused green and smart state that inspires the nation'.

“When it is implemented, the SPRWTS will also mitigate Penang’s risks of water crises in this age of ‘climate change’ when the duration and intensity of dry weather spells are becoming more unpredictable.

“As such, it is hoped that the Federal government, through UKAS, will act promptly and decisively to initiate the implementation of the SPRWTS soon,” Jaseni said today.

He said Sungai Perak was a relatively an under-utilised Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) raw water resource, and the SPRWTS has the potential to ensure water supply sustainability in Perak and Penang until 2050.

The original specified timeline for the implementation of the SPRWTS is six years; and Year 2025 is exactly six years away.

Since 1973, Sungai Muda has served as Penang’s primary raw water resource.

Today, more than 80 per cent of Penang’s raw water is abstracted from this river.



Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa. - STR/ SHAHNAZ FAZLIE SHAHRIZAL

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

“Looking ahead, 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.

“Moreover, Kedah is undertaking the 2,592 MLD Jeniang Water Transfer Project, ostensibly to abstract more water from Sungai Muda in the near future, upstream of PBAPP’s Lahar Tiang Intake in Penang,” he noted.

He also said that since 2011, the Penang government and PBAPP had been pursuing the implementation of the SPRWTS, not only for the benefit of Penang, but for the benefit of northern Perak as well.

However, the record showed that the previous Federal government failed to implement the SPRWTS in the period between 2012 and 2018.