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PRESS RELEASE

Commemoration of World Water Day 2015 at the Air Itam Dam, Penang.

PENANG'S WATER TARIFFS THE MOST "PEOPLE-FRIENDLY" IN MALAYSIA

PENANG, Sunday, 26/4/2015: Penang's domestic tariffs are the most "people-friendly" in Malaysia for households who use less than 35,000 litres per month.

Penang Chief Minister Y.A.B. Tuan Lim Guan Eng urged Penangites not to be "fooled or misled" by parties who proclaim that water tariffs have been raised too many times, or that Penang's tariffs burden the people, or that the timing of the tariff review is "untimely" or "suspicious."

He cited the following facts and figures:

- Penang households who use less than 35,000 litres of water per month pay an average of RM0.32 per 1,000 litres.
- More than 7 out of every 10 households in Penang use less than 35,000 litres of water per month.
- Penang's average tariff of RM0.32 per 1,000 litres is less than 50% of the national average of RM0.66 per 1,000 litres. Kedah charges RM0.67, Perak charges RM0.73 and Johor charges RM1.05.

As such, Y.A.B. Lim said, 75.3% of all households in Penang enjoy the most "people-friendly" domestic tariffs in Malaysia.

"Please let me be clear about this: no one else charges RM0.32 per 1,000 litres for the first 35,000 litres per month, anywhere else in Malaysia. This is the simple truth that nobody can deny," he said.

"Your people-friendly State Government would like to emphasise that there is a good benefit or reward to using water wisely in Penang," he said at the commemoration of World Water Day 2015 at the Air Itam Dam here today.

However, the Chief Minister added, Penang still needed its community's cooperation to avoid water rationing.

“We need you to conserve water because of climate change. Compared to 10 years ago, it is now hotter, hazier and drier at certain times of the year. We cannot fight climate change, so we have to adapt... by using less water so that we always have enough for all,” he said.

Y.A.B. Lim said the Federal Government and Perak had also stalled the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS), an inter-state water project proposed by Penang since 1999.

“The Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) does not want to mediate discussions between Perak and Penang,” he said. “Meanwhile, Perak has indicated that it only wants to sell Penang treated water when what we need is raw water. Clearly, this idea is not practical because their price will be too high,” he added.

“The Federal Government must be held accountable for undertaking the SPRWTS, in accordance to the 2011 agreements signed when Penang migrated to the National Water Services Re-structuring Initiative. We will continue to push but we do not know when this project will materialise. Until the Federal Government keeps its promise to Penang, we ask all Penangites to save water, just to be safe,” he added.

260 L/C/D WATER CONSERVATION TARGET

PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa said the target of the Penang Water Tariff Review 2015 was to reduce per capita domestic consumption to 260 litres/capita/day (l/c/d).

In 2014, domestic consumption in Penang accounted for 59% of the average daily consumption of 813 MLD. The average domestic consumption in Penang was 293 l/c/d.

He said a 33 l/c/d reduction (from 293 l/c/d to 260 l/c/d) would result in a 11.3% reduction in domestic consumption, or 54 MLD. “If we deduct 54 MLD from 813 MLD consumed in 2014, the result is 759 MLD. 759 MLD falls between Penang's consumption of 739 MLD in 2009 and 782 MLD in 2010. So, we can theoretically ‘turn back the clock’ and reduce Penang's domestic consumption to the level of about 5 years ago,” he added.

In other words, Ir. Jaseni said, reducing per capita consumption to 260 l/c/d would help to ensure that Penang has sufficient water beyond Year 2020, accommodating the 2-3 years delay in the implementation of the SPRTWS.

He cited 5 positive impacts if Penang could achieve the 260 l/c/d target:

- Penang would be able to avoid water rationing even in extreme dry seasons caused by climate change;
- Sufficient water supply to cater for future population growth;
- Enough water for future socio-economic growth;
- Prolonging the lifespan of its existing water supply infrastructure. This will delay the need for additional multi-million ringgit infrastructure projects that will inevitably lead to higher water tariffs; and
- “Buying” Penang time to realise a second or alternative raw water resource for the long-term, be it the SPRWTS, rainwater harvesting, water recycling or desalination.

“Please allow me to clarify that 260 l/c/d is not a difficult or impossible target. The national average was 210 l/c/d in 2013. Singapore has achieved 150 l/c/d in 2014. I would also like to point out that 14 years ago, Penang’s per capita domestic consumption in Penang was 262 l/c/d in 2001,” Ir. Jaseni said.

“So, please use water wisely. Visit www.pba.com.my for water saving tips today,” he added. (ends)

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